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ABSTRACT

The 18 articles in the first section of this journal issue provide information about the National Writing Project, while the 22 articles in the second section discuss classroom writing projects. Among the topics discussed in the first section are the National Writing Projects in Arizona, Northeast Texas, and Boston: teacher behavior during inservice education: setting an informed and informing context for a writing project: and high school teachers and freshman composition. Articles in the second section consider the basics as a background for writing, writing as a discipline, the journal as an aid to teaching composition, a process-oriented strategy for teaching organization, student attitudes toward writing class, using choral reading in composition instruction, imitation in the basic writing class, reader-response grammar, peer evaluation of compositions, and evaluating creative writing. (FL)

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bulletin

WRITING PROJECTS

Volume 22 ..... Number 2

February, 1980

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ARIZONA ENGLISH BULLETIN - - A Member of the NCTE Exchange Agreement

The ARIZONA ENGLISH BULLETIN is a publication of the Arizona English Teachers Association, a nonprofit state affiliate of the National Council of Teachers of English. The ARIZONA ENGLISH BULLETIN exists to create effective statewide articulation of English teachers at all levels, to increase awareness of new ideas, programs, and movements in English, and to improve instruction at every level.

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Institutional memberships/subscriptions to the ARIZONA ENGLISH BULLETIN are $10 a year. Back issues can be ordered, if available. Check with the treasurer for exact prices, since costs vary considerably from issue to issue. Many back issues are now available from NCTE. Check the yearly catalog of resources for exact prices. A copy of NCTE's *Resources* can be obtained from NCTE, 1111 Kenyon Rd., Urbana IL 61801.

The topics and *deadlines* for the 1980–81 issues are as follows:

October: "The Expanding Universe of English Teaching" *(August 15)*
February: "Language All Around Us" *(December 1)*
April: "Professional Concerns of the English/Language Arts Teacher" *(Feb. 1)*

AEB welcomes manuscripts on these or other topics of interest to teachers of English and language arts at all levels. Manuscripts should be limited to 10–12 double-spaced pages; footnotes should be kept to a minimum and typed following the text. Use the *MLA Style Sheet* for footnote and bibliography form. The editor reserves the right to make minor textual changes in the interest of clarity or space limitation. Send manuscripts to

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FROM THE EDITOR

Part I of this issue of the *Arizona English Bulletin* contains what I believe to be the largest and most comprehensive collection of information on the National Writing Project that exists anywhere. Since I have now read all these articles at least four times, I must be the greatest authority on the NWP outside the Bay Area. And if all the excellent articles in Part II on classroom writing projects won't make me the best writing teacher in the nation, I don't know what will. I hope they'll be equally helpful to you.

If you are curious about the National Writing Project and want to know more of what goes on--from selection to follow-up--there is enough material here to give you a taste of both the diversity and the similarity that exist among the Projects. If you would like to join a Project or learn where the nearest ones are, you can do that too. (Further information, including names and addresses of directors, can be obtained from Jim Gray or Miles Myers at 5635 Tolman Hall, University of California, Berkeley CA 94720.) And if you are thinking of organizing your own local Writing Project, there are many ideas here to get you started and keep you going. If your interest in writing projects is focused mainly on your own classroom, you will find in Part II many excellent suggestions and workable strategies that can be adapted to your own needs. And throughout this volume, you will find references to authors and books that will give you valuable background for improving writing instruction.

The topic of writing is one that has always drawn a great deal of response from teachers. Several previous issues of the *AEB* on this topic, for instance, have been among the largest and most popular. But the current interest in writing seems to be more than just a periodic surge; the Writing Projects with their focus on classroom teachers and on teachers writing have been described as the new professionalism in teacher education, have been hailed as the antidote to teacher burnout, and have been promoted with missionary zeal by virtually everyone involved. We seem to have discovered, as a profession, not just another gimmick for increasing student interest, nor another way of meeting a recurrent professional challenge, but an experience that has put us in touch with ourselves in a way that allows us to touch others. Writing is no longer felt to be merely part of an academic curriculum, but a true *curriculum vitae*--a course of life. This may seem too extravagant a claim, but so be it; after all, I've been involved in a Writing Project too.

Margaret Fleming

WRITING PROJECTS

PART I: WRITING PROJECTS ACROSS THE NATION

The National Writing Project: What Is It and What's In It for Everyone? 1
Elizabeth F. Penfield, University of New Orleans

The National Writing Project in Arizona 9
William T. Ojala, Arizona State University, Tempe
James R. Rankin, University of Arizona, Tucson

Variations on a Theme: The NorthEast Texas Writing Project 13
Glenn Irvin, East Texas State University, Commerce

Boston: The Bay Area Model in an Urban School System 16
Joseph W. Check, University of Massachusetts at Boston

Developing a Writing Project in a Rural County: Anatomy of a Process 21
Richard L. Graves, Auburn University, Auburn, Alabama
John C. Painter, Lee County, Alabama, Schools

A Writing Project and In-Service Activity 25
Alan M. McLeod and John S. Oehler, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond

The National Writing Project 27
Anne Ruggles Gere, University of Washington, Seattle

Research on Teacher Behavior During In-Service Education 30
Dan Donlan, University of California, Riverside

Changes That Matter 33
Billie Thompson, Tempe Area Career and Curriculum Development Center, Arizona

Cutting Cords and Climbing Ladders 38
Eunice Sims, Georgia State University, Atlanta

Publish or Perish: Educators Face a Writing Course 42
Anne Sherrill, University of Iowa, Iowa City

Confessions of an English(?) Teacher 47
S. K. Curtis, Tucson

There Is No Solution. Seek It Lovingly. 54
Bruce C. Appleby, University of California, Berkeley

Knowledge: A Dimension the Writing Project Model Neglects? 56
Sam Watson, Jr., University of North Carolina, Charlotte

Teachers, Knowledge, and Power: Setting an Informed and Informing Context for a Writing Project 61
Charles W. Bridges and Richard Van DeWeghe, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces

Teachers Writing 68
Michael Heller, Thunderbird High School, Phoenix

What's New in Boston: Two Projects in Composition 75
Paul Kelly, Boston University

High School Teachers and Freshman Composition 78
R. Baird Shuman, University of Illinois, Urbana/Champaign

PART II: WRITING PROJECTS IN THE CLASSROOM

Later We Will Write 82
Susan Masek, Sunnyside Junior High School, Tucson

Why *Should* Johnny Write? 83
Timothy R. Donovan, Northeastern University, Boston

Basics--A Background for Writing 86
Carolyn Ann Sheley, Moon Valley High School, Glendale District, Arizona

"I Like It!" Doesn't Make It Good: Writing Is (A) Discipline 89
Alma A. Ilacqua, Le Moyne College, Syracuse, New York

Teaching Composing Collaboratively 95
John Clifford, University of North Carolina, Wilmington

Day After Day: The Journal as an Aid to Teaching Composition 99
Nancy Mairs, University of Arizona, Tucson

Map Work: A Process-Oriented Strategy for Teaching Organization . . . 102
Rex L. Veeder, Sunnyside High School, Tucson

Student Attitudes Toward A Writing Class 105
J. W. Ney, Arizona State University, Tempe

Oral Methodologies for Composition Instruction: A Selective Annotated Bibliography 113
Robert C. Wess, Pembroke State University, Pembroke, North Carolina

Using Choral Reading in Composition Instruction 119
William H. Cullen, State University College, Potsdam, New York

A Way of Looking at Voice and Audience in Student Writing 124
Tom Reigstad, State University of New York, Buffalo

Woolf's *A Room of One's Own:* Diet for Students in Intermediate and Advanced Expository Writing Courses 128
Marco A. Portales, University of Houston, Clear Lake City, Texas

One Hen, Two Ducks, Three Squawking Geese: An Accretive Approach to Freshman English 132
Frances B. Emerson, University of Arizona, Tucson

Working Toward Paper-to-Paper Continuity in the Teaching of Writing 136
Katherine M. Jones Loheyde, University of Connecticut, Storrs

Imitation in the Basic Writing Class 139
Irwin Weiser, Tennessee Technological University, Cookeville

Some Needed Research on Writing and Dialect 144
R. W. Reising, Pembroke State University, Pembroke, North Carolina

Reader-Response Grammar 150
Stephen K. Tollefson, University of California, Berkeley

A Return to the Draft: Or, How to Wage War on the Non-Reviser 157
Ruth D. Tschumy, Hawaii School for Girls, Honolulu

In Praise of Peer Appraisal 162
Candace Jesse Stout, Hickman High School, Columbia, Missouri

What Is Written Must Be Read 166
William Rakauskas, University of Scranton, Scranton, Pennsylvania

Surviving the Squeeze: Evaluating Creative Writing 170
Robert A. Rennert, Findlay College, Findlay, Ohio

Book Review: *Composition and Its Teaching,* edited by Richard Gebhardt 175
James R. Rankin, University of Arizona, Tucson

Standards for Basic Skills Writing Programs 177
The National Council of Teachers of English

Graphics by Lynne Ackerman

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SITES OF THE NATIONAL WRITING PROJECT

ALASKA	Writing Project of Anchorage	Anchorage
ARIZ.	Greater Phoenix Area Writing Project	Tempe
	Southern Arizona Writing Project	Tucson
ARK.	Mid-South Writing Project	State University
CAL.	Area III Writing Project	Sacramento
	Bay Area Writing Project	Berkeley
	Bay Area Writing Project	Northridge
	California Writing Project	Irvine
	Central California Writing Project	Santa Cruz
	Central Coast Writing Project	San Luis Obispo
	Inland Area Writing Project	Riverside
	Northern California Writing Project	Chico
	Redwood Writing Project	Arcata
	San Diego Area Writing Project	San Diego
	San Joaquin Valley Writing Project	Fresno
	Sonoma State Coll. /North Bay Writing Ctr.	Rohnert Park
	South Basin Writing Project	Long Beach
	South Bay Area Writing Project	San Jose
	South Coast Writing Project	Santa Barbara
	UCLA/California Writing Project	Los Angeles
COLO.	Colorado Writing Project	Boulder
FLA.	Tampa Bay Area Writing Project	Tampa
GA.	Georgia Mountains Writing Project	Dahlonega
	S.E. Center for the Teaching of Writing	Atlanta
IDAHO	Idaho Writing Project	Boise
ILL.	Chicago Area Writing Project	Evanston
KANS.	Kansas Writing Project	Wichita
LA.	Greater New Orleans Writing Project	New Orleans
MASS.	Boston Writing Project	Dorchester
MICH.	Upper Peninsula Writing Project	Marquette
MINN.	Great River Writing Project	Winona
	Prairie Writing Project	Moorhead
	Twin Cities Area Writing Project	St. Paul
MISS.	Mississippi Writing Project	University
MO.	Missouri Writers' Workshop	Columbia
	St. Louis Area Writing Project	Webster Groves
MONT.	University of Montana Writing Project	Missoula
NEB.	Nebraska Writing Project	Lincoln
	Nebraska Writing Project	Chadron
N.H.	Exeter Writing Project	Exeter
N.J.	Rutgers/Central New Jersey Writing Project	New Brunswick
N.M.	New Mexico Writing Project	Las Cruces
N.Y.	Bay Area Writing Project in New York	Bronx
	Capital District Writing Project	Albany
	Dowling Coll./Long Island Writing Project	Oakdale
	New York/Bay Area Writing Project	Yorktown Heights
	Western New York/Bay Area Writing Project	Buffalo
N.C.	Duke Writing Institute	Durham
	University of N.C. at Charlotte Writing Pr.	Charlotte
N.D.	Northern Plains Writing Project	Minot
OKLA.	Oklahoma Writing Project	Norman
ORE.	Oregon Writing Project	Central Point
	University of Oregon/Oregon Writing Project	Eugene
S.C.	Wofford Writing Project	Spartanburg
TENN.	Greater Memphis Writing Project	Memphis
TEXAS	East Texas Writing Project	Texarkana
	Northeast Texas Writing Project	Commerce
	Texas Hill Country Writing Project	Austin
UTAH	Utah Writing Project	Logan
VA.	Capital Virginia Writing Project	Richmond
	Central Virginia Writing Project	Charlottesville
	Northern Virginia Writing Project	Fairfax
	South-Side Virginia Writing Project	Petersburg
	Southwest Virginia Writing Project	Blacksburg
	Tidewater Virginia Writing Project	Williamsburg
WASH.	Puget Sound Writing Program	Seattle
W.V.	West Virginia Writing Project	Institute
WISC.	Wisconsin Writing Project	Madison

THE NATIONAL WRITING PROJECT: WHAT IS IT AND WHAT'S IN IT FOR EVERYONE?

Elizabeth F. Penfield

By now, lots of teachers have heard of the Bay Area Writing Project and probably tend to think, as I did, "Oh, that's something that Berkeley does" or "Well, it probably works in San Francisco" or "Here comes another fad in the teaching of writing." I first heard of BAWP, as we fondly call it, from an NEH news release that proudly announced the awarding of a grant in excess of some $600,000 or so, money that the Bay Area Writing Project was in turn to use to fund baby BAWP's all over the country. The assumptions and goals behind the project sounded solid, the money irresistible, the Berkeley aura both attractive and intimidating. To someone teaching in Louisiana, the state that ranks 50th in literacy, Berkeley seems Nirvana, but nonetheless I dared to write off for the guidelines and a fuller description of the project. One year later the Greater New Orleans Writing Project, GNOWP son of BAWP, was born, and all of a sudden I was involved in something called the National Writing Project, a synergistic creation that links together all of the writing project sites that are modeled after and partially funded by BAWP. What worked in San Francisco has now worked in New Orleans (and I regard Louisiana as the acid test). And in Anchorage and Boulder and Missoula and Phoenix and Memphis and Tampa and Albany. In rural areas too: the upper peninsula of Michigan, the hill country of Texas, the prairies of North Dakota and Minnesota. The National Writing Project is growing like some mutant from outer space as each project site in turn breeds new writing projects. When something gets that big, it gets awesome, and so I am here trying to demystify the National Writing Project: to explain exactly what worked and to show how anyone--teacher, department, or institution--can use some of the results as ammunition in the ongoing battle to improve the teaching of writing and the writing of students. I will describe the assumptions behind the National Writing Project (for after all these are what worked), the research that supports them, and a number of ideas that they have led to. It's a lot of information--something for everyone.

> . . . IF WE IMPROVE THE WRITING OF TEACHERS AND THE TEACHING OF WRITING, WE WILL IMPROVE THE WRITING OF STUDENTS.

The first assumption is that the writing problem is shared by the universities and the schools and therefore can best be addressed by cooperatively planned and cooperatively funded university and school efforts. For far too long, university teachers have blamed the secondary teachers, who have blamed the primary teachers. Everyone, of course, has blamed the students, their parents, the socio-economic

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conditions, and the general moral decay of the nation. Not to mention TV. English departments can claim their share of finger-pointing, although only recently have they begun to be concerned seriously with doing something about it, and they are showing their concern by way of new degree programs. Degrees in rhetoric, in the teaching of writing, in teaching in the two-year college are now supplementing the traditional programs in linguistics and in literature. And as composition programs grow, more and more universities are adopting writing workshops for their faculties, to train the TA's and to retool the senior staff. The National Writing Project simply takes this concern one step further--into the K-12 classroom.

The Greater New Orleans Writing Project illustrates the kind of cooperation between schools and universities necessary to improve writing from kindergarten up. Initiated by the English Department of UNO, planned with the Language Arts supervisors in the metropolitan area, and implemented through the cooperation of the University and the neighboring school boards, the Greater New Orleans Writing Project attracts first-grade teachers on through high school, from private and public schools, and from science, social studies, and foreign languages, as well as from English. For the first time, teachers have an opportunity to talk to other teachers from other grades, districts, disciplines. War stories quickly give way to tales of success, and the simple recognition that other teachers are trying to improve their students' writing and are succeeding has kept some excellent people in the profession and has renewed the interest of others. Being a part of the Greater New Orleans Writing Project brings recognition, and recognition is important, for a system that has no merit increases must have a way to boost morale. Goodness knows, the system needs all the help it can get.

A second assumption, and one that I hope will soon start to ring false, is that most teachers have not been adequately prepared as teachers of writing. While certification requirements will vary from one state to another, few teachers who graduated more than two years ago took courses in writing, and those who took English methods courses found them geared far more to the teaching of literature than to the teaching of writing. Some of that has changed, thanks to the cry "back to basics," which rings, often misguidedly, in the halls of state legislatures. However, for most prospective teachers, as is the case in Louisiana, the recent developments at the state level that were intended to improve the teaching of writing have simply meant a mandated course in advanced grammar. Legislators, like English teachers, often believe that if something didn't work the first time, "you just need more of it."

To counter the fact that most teachers lack a background in the teaching of writing, each of the sites involved in the National Writing Project holds a summer writing institute, a total immersion in the teaching of writing. While the length of the institute varies from one place to another--from two to eight weeks--depending on what best fits the need, all have certain characteristics in common: all involve teachers in writing and the teaching of writing. And here is where the other assumptions enter in:

1. That successful teachers of writing can be identified; the best practices of successful teachers can be effectively demonstrated to others.
2. That the best teacher of teachers is usually another teacher who has had success in a similar situation.
3. That much is known about the teaching of writing, although most teachers are unaware of that knowledge.
4. And that teachers of writing must themselves write.

These final assumptions drive the institutes. The teachers who participate in the summer institutes are the best that can be found. They are successful teachers of writing and are identified as such in various ways. Some of the project directors choose among nominees of the school districts, some tap their writing fellows based on information from the teacher grapevine, some choose among applicants. Some directors only consider as many people as there are spaces in the institute (usually 25); others screen, then select; and still others screen, narrow down further, and then make the decisions. As varied as the procedures are, ranging from interviews and writing samples to letters of support from students, the goal remains the same: to select people who are excellent teachers of writing. The best, no matter what the field or the grade. Each teacher chosen for the institute becomes a University Writing Fellow (the capital *F* is important), and that's where the boost to morale enters in. In addition to a stipend, at the institute's end each GNOWP Fellow receives a certificate signed by every important university official we can think of. The stipends, the certificates, the letters that go to principals and school officials all emphasize the special status of the institute fellows. By the end of the institute, they are experts in the teaching of writing.

During the institute, the 25 or so fellows who have been selected provide the major resources for the next five weeks, the average length of time for most institutes. Each of the fellows will demonstrate at least one, perhaps two, teaching techniques that have been successful. Each presentation usually runs from one and a half to three hours and involves some writing on the part of the other fellows. Far from being lectures, the presentations are the best kind of show and tell--a thorough overview of the research and theory, followed by explanation and practice--all from the perspective of someone who is on the battle line. Teachers teaching teachers possess an authenticity and realistic viewpoint only rarely attained by university professors. I think of myself as a teacher, not as a professor, but even so I am not a rose by another name. I teach at most two courses, a total of 50 or so students meeting three times a week for a total of six hours; my school counterpart teaches five courses, with sometimes as many preparations, a total of at least 150 students meeting five times a week for a total of 25 hours. While I also serve on department and university committees and carry out research, that is hardly comparable to lunch duty, bus duty, and various extracurricular activities, to say nothing of potty duty. A teaching technique that works well for me may be a disaster in the schools, but if it worked with one inner-city eleventh grade class, it will probably work with another. Teachers distrust professors and believe teachers, and with good reason.

As simple as this idea is--teachers teaching teachers--it is a radical one when viewed through the eyes of an English department chairman ("Well, that sort of thing is all right in an education course, but this is English"), to say nothing of graduate deans ("What do you mean, the teachers teach?"). Here is where the BAWP aura can be helpful; after all, if it's good enough for Berkeley, it's good enough for us. And the presentations live up to their billing. For instance, the guidelines set out by the Northern Virginia Writing Project call for a written summary of the school situation, student population, and level; the theory or general principles underlying the presentation, including why the theory ought to work; the problems the theory is addressing; the assumptions and attitudes of the presenter; and a short annotated bibliography. In addition, presenters are encouraged to include a combination of lecture, discussion, A-V demonstration, handouts, and "doing" by the audience; to provide samples of actual student writing in order to prompt concrete responses and questions from the audience; and to comment on evaluations, ways the ideas presented fit with other approaches, and ways the materials can be adapted to other situations.[1]

The idea of teachers teaching teachers has been one of the most useful developments to come out of the National Writing Project. And when that idea is combined with the quality of the fellows and the comprehensiveness and usefulness of the presentations, the results are positive. At the Inland Area Writing Project (Riverside, Cal.), teachers rated the institute consistently higher than ratings given by a matched sample enrolled in a structured lecture/seminar program.[2] Back in New Orleans, the writing fellows were asked to rate the institute's usefulness in comparison to other graduate courses they had taken. Out of a possible high of 105, the institute received a 104.5. I'm still looking for the teacher who ruined the perfect score.

Out of a group of 25 teachers, the presentations will cover a lot of ground, both in the theory and in the practice of teaching writing. Frequently a teacher will know what works, but not why (the theory) nor how (the recent research). The presentations allow the teacher to develop the answers to the why's and how's in a way that pertains directly to the technique under discussion. Still, some gaps will appear and this is where the consultants come in. Ranging from the resident consultants who are the director and assistant director, to the close at hand, for example some from last year's group, to the big guns of composition, these people fill in the holes, providing, say, a summary of recent research in composing or an overview of ways to evaluate writing or a quick history of different theories of invention. Again, the emphasis is on the practical, on the classroom. Again, everyone participates, which is to say that everyone writes.

Perhaps the single most strongly held belief of the National Writing Project is that teachers of writing must themselves write. When I first heard this notion I thought, "Well, of course." But then I started to think again, and, feeling a bit uncomfortable, started to make a list of what I wrote: articles, papers, memos, reports, tests, comments, minutes, exercises, responses to exercises. I stopped to examine the list and was struck by its dullness. Pushing myself, I added *journal*, the world's cheapest psychiatrist. Still the list looked grim. Defensively, I kept digging: letters--to friends, to companies, to associates; lists--things to buy, to do, to remember; directions, messages. Enough. As poor and uninspired as my writing list was, many other teachers' lists are poorer. At best my list could be divided into two categories, occupational and survival writing. Both boiled down to one function: utilitarian. Gone was writing for pleasure, gone was writing for discovery, gone was writing in the humanistic sense--real writing. It is this real writing that the institute fosters. While the amount of writing varies from one site to another, in all cases it is a lot. The kind of writing differs too--from formal to informal, journal to essay, self-expressive to persuasive--but in all cases, variety is more the rule than the exception. During the five weeks of the Montana Writing Project's summer institute, the fellows and directors produced 442 pages of material, ranging from a personal essay to a critique to a "real" piece headed for a magazine or journal to a paper on the presentation.[3]

The purpose of all this writing is fourfold: (1) to reexperience the process of writing; (2) to improve writing; (3) to encourage writing; and (4) to introduce the idea of working on writing in groups--peer editing. Somehow, all this seems to work. Not only are teachers heartened and interested enough to write for publication, they are publishing. Out of the Montana Writing Project, seven articles have been printed or accepted in U.S. and Canadian journals and magazines; out of the Oregon Writing Project, five institute fellows were finalists in the state "Teachers as Writers" contest, and a sixth was the winner of a prose prize.[4] This sort of increased interest in writing for publication rubs off naturally on students, and in order to provide an outlet for

good student writing, the Nebraska Writing Project is currently compiling a directory for English teachers that lists the names, addresses, and editorial guidelines of newspapers, journals, and magazines that are interested in publishing student work.[5] To help students along toward publication, the South Bay Writing Project (San Jose) sponsored a Young Writers Conference for some 300 fifth- through twelfth-grade students. The students chose between two workshops that covered topics such as "Handling Dialogue," "Writing a Short Story," and "How to Write an Article." Like the institutes, the conference stressed the students' own writing and their sharing of their writing.

Publication is one of the ways in which the institute fellows and their students reach a wider audience, but if the National Writing Project stopped with what went on in the institutes and conferences, it would probably fail. This is where the in-service programs enter. By the end of the institute each of the fellows is an expert in one area of the teaching of writing and has a peer-tested demonstration to go along with the expertise. Not that the technique discussed in the presentation is teacher-proof, but it has been tested by teachers. At this point the project director usually prepares a pamphlet that describes each of the presentations, listing the grade level, student population, and aims involved. The brochure is then sent to the various school districts, and the fellows become teacher-consultants, available for three-hour workshops. In New Orleans, the in-service workshops take on different shapes and sizes that involve both university and schools. For instance, the University offers a three-credit-hour graduate English course on the teaching of writing using seven to ten teacher-consultants to give demonstrations and a one-credit-hour graduate English course that is a series of four to five workshops on a specific topic such as evaluation, motivation, invention, and so on--involving two or three teacher-consultants. In addition to what the University offers, the local NCTE affiliate sponsors a conference of five concurrent workshops--using five teacher-consultants. Then the school systems themselves get into the act with a fair number of in-service day presentations that are sponsored by the school boards and mandated by the state and with several Title I funded demonstrations held as part of Orleans Parish's Secondary Curriculum Improvement Program. In each case, having 25 or more presentations come out of each summer's institute allows us to tailor each demonstration to meet the needs of the teachers. The flexibility of subject matter and variety of format broaden the impact of the fellows; thus each writing project affects the teaching of writing directly--through the institute--and indirectly--through the in-service program. All of this improved teaching ultimately affects the writing of students. The premise is simple: if we improve the writing of teachers and the teaching of writing, we will improve the writing of students.

It seems to work. One study done in Oregon compared the writing of two groups of students: those whose teachers had attended a summer institute and those whose teachers had not. Four samples were collected from each group and rated holistically for primary traits. The institute students in intermediate grades outranked the control students in "number of editing attempts, increase in number of paragraphs, increase in handwriting legibility." The growth in writing was the same, a fact that might be discouraging if the control group had not had four more weeks of instruction than institute groups.[6] The in-service programs also have an effect. In Denver one group of teachers attended in-service workshops conducted by Colorado Writing Project teacher-consultants while the teachers of another junior high did not. Writing samples from students in both schools were compared, September vs. May, and examined for the rate of growth between the two groups. Samples from the in-service school were significantly higher at the .001 level.[7]

Where this degree of improvement in writing exists, other changes also occur, changes in perceptions, preferences, and processes of writing. A follow-up study of the participants in the New Jersey Writing Project vs. a control group examined attitudes toward writing as well as the writing itself. The study, conducted by Janet Emig and Joyce Carroll, found significant changes in both teachers' and students' perceptions of writing. While students of the institute teachers scored higher on questions such as "I reread what I've written," "I voluntarily revise what I've written," and "I like what I write," the most impressive result is that they prefer writing to watching TV.[8]

Anything as large as the National Writing Project that gets so many people excited about writing is bound to have some unanticipated spinoffs, new ideas that caught fire as sparks flew from project to project. Here's a sampling:

The Prairie Writing Project holds a one-week mini-institute for college faculty.

The Virginia Writing Project has produced a 12-program color TV series on the most successful teaching of writing, presentations of the best of the best.

The Bay Area Writing Project has started to publish some of the materials that grew out of their program.[9]

The Memphis Writing Project holds a "Wordsmith Tournament," complete with the 40-word dash and the 400-word freestyle.[10]

The Oregon Writing Project is preparing for a five-week session on curriculum development.[11]

The Tampa Bay Writing Project is campaigning to reduce class size to the NCTE recommended levels.[12]

The Greater New Orleans Writing Project has a new position in the schools--a full-time writing resource person responsible for faculty development.

All of the projects require money, of course, and here is where the National Writing Project really helps, for it is indeed a network. "Who got what grant how?" is just the beginning, for after that, the next question is, "What sort of evaluation procedure are they using?" Answers to those questions as well as those not yet formulated come through the National Writing Project's *Network News*, a newsletter published four times a year. Courtesy of the National Writing Project, BAWP, the mother of us all, is collecting a vast amount of information that can be used to push for faculty development, in-service programs, writing assessment, reasonble class size, writing across the curriculum, process vs. product, writing as discovery, prewriting, peer editing, and on and on and on. All notable studies that come out of the National Writing Project will soon be available through ERIC.

As of this May, the National Writing Project consisted of 65 sites in some 24 states, with more to come as the result of 63 requests for the 1979-1980 BAWP guidelines. Out of those 63 mailings BAWP will regrant NEH funds to some 15 or more projects. But NEH is not the only source of funds. In California, the Bay Area model has been declared exemplary, which means that local school districts can easily get up to $10,000 for a project patterned after BAWP. Once HEW gives its imprimatur and declares the project exemplary, all states should have relatively easy access to $10,000 per program under Title IV-C. With any luck, the momentum will build in other states as it has in California, and even state legislatures will see the light. California, home

of the tight-fisted Proposition 13, last year dedicated $140,000 in support of the California Writing Project. May we all be so fortunate.

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[1]Northern Virginia Writing Project Outline for English 595/Ed 595 Participant Presentations.

[2]NWP Network News. I (December, 1978), p. 3.

[3]NWP Network News. I (May, 1979), p. 3.

[4]NWP Network News. I (May, 1979), p. 2.

[5]NWP Network News. I (March, 1978), p. 6.

[6]NWP Network News. I (May, 1979), p. 2.

[7]NWP Network News. I (December, 1978), p. 5.

[8]Emig, Janet, and Joyce Carroll, "Evaluation and Development of Student Writing." NCTE, Kansas City, November 24, 1979.

[9]The latest is Jack Hailey's Teaching Writing K-8. Berkeley: Instructional Labs, UC Berkeley (available from Instructional Labs, Dept. of Ed., UCB, CA 94720).

[10]According to the write-up in NWP Network News, "The Qualifying Events included the Forty Word Dash, a ten minute effort with a maximum word limit of 48 words in which a three-dimensional inanimate object is presented and the writer tries to describe the object as vividly and forcefully as possible. The Eighty Word Dash calls for the writer to put into words what a photographer attempted to capture in a picture. The One Hundred and Twenty Word Dash requires a letter which responds to an event described in newspaper clippings. The Final Event was a Four Hundred Word Freestyle writing. Poetry, literary magazine, prose piece, and journalism events filled out the program." To find out more, write Ramsey Fowler, Department of English, Memphis State University.

[11]According to the description in NWP Network News, "Twenty-five teachers will meet for five weeks, and although they will use editing groups, their concentration will be on preparing in-service presentations. For each presentation they will prepare packets containing statements of the goals and objectives for the presentation, the target grade level(s), an outline of the presentations, examples of the handouts to be used, bibliographies, ditto masters of recommended lessons, and notice of alternate presentations designed for classes involving students with a second language or learning disabilities." For more information, write to Patty Stone, Crater High School, Central Point, Oregon, about this plan.

HOW TO EASE THE STRAIN AND ACCOMPLISH MORE

Your class is too large to permit much individualized instruction. Can you still teach writing effectively, and, if so, how? *Classroom Practices, 1979-1980: How to Handle the Paper Load,* recently published by the National Council of Teachers of English, brings together stimulating but sensible ideas from 27 writing teachers at all levels of education, in the U.S. and Canada. The publication was edited by Gene Stanford, chair, and the NCTE Committee on Classroom Practices.

Trying to grade everything each student writes is a time-consuming, self-defeating trap that can be avoided, these teachers say. "Write more--grade less" is their motto. They maintain that instead of involving oneself chiefly with students' *papers,* it is better to enter into a working relationship with students, "recognizing that more learning can occur through the two-way communication" of a laboratory approach.

Students can best be helped to improve a paper, the authors say, if the teacher gives it several quick readings at several stages of development. Knowing what you are scanning for at those preliminary stages is vital, they stress. This is no time to focus on comma fault; rather, underdevelopment of ideas, lack of specific detail and concrete images should be the concerns. Several teachers offer checklists for learning this discipline.

Students can be led to view writing as a pleasurable activity if an enthusiastic teacher learns tactics for sharing concerns and possible solutions with them at all stages of the process, writing along with them on occasion.

The authors of *Classroom Practices* stress student self- and peer analysis of compositions, telling how to form editorial groups and offering lists of questions students can ask about content, organization, and language when confronting each other's papers. These activities pay off, they say, by taking the mystery out of writing. They also offer rationales and guidelines for keeping the grading process for final essays from bogging down in error-hunting and for helping it serve to encourage students, rather than threaten or depress them.

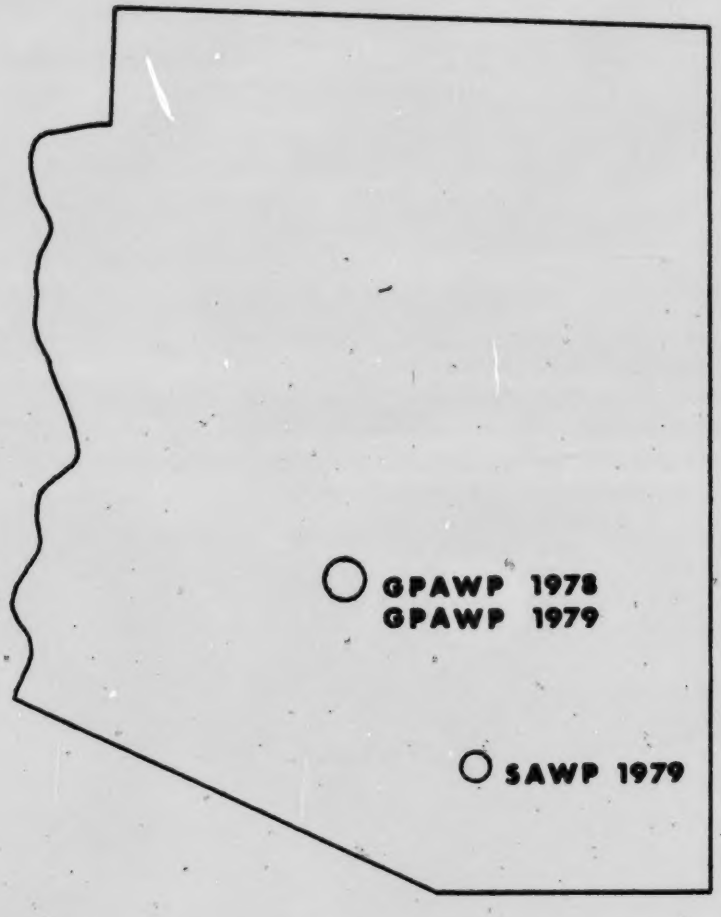
Price: $5.00; NCTE members, $4.50. NCTE Stock No. 06897.

National Council of Teachers of English
1111 Kenyon Rd.
Urbana, IL 61801

THE NATIONAL WRITING PROJECT IN ARIZONA

William T. Ojala and James R. Rankin

There are two Writing Project sites in Arizona, the Greater Phoenix Area Writing Project (GPAWP) in Tempe and the Southern Arizona Writing Project (SAWP) in Tucson. GPAWP began in 1978 and was repeated in 1979; SAWP had its first year in 1979. Both these projects were modeled on the Bay Area Writing Project and thus are similar in format. The following table presents some of the data on each for comparison.



WILLIAM T. OJALA is Associate Professor of English and Director of Freshman English at Arizona State University.
JAMES R. RANKIN is Associate Professor of Secondary Education at the University of Arizona.

	Greater Phoenix Area Writing Project 1978	*Greater Phoenix Area Writing Project 1979*	*Southern Arizona Writing Project 1979*
Number of participants	24	21	17
Participants by grade level	E=4, JH=7, HS= 11, C=2	E= 9, JH=1, HS=11	E=2, JH=3, HS=9, C=2
Subjects taught	English, reading, speech, drama, elementary subjects		English, business, free enterprise, reading, journalism, social studies, elementary subjects
Directors		Kenneth Donelson G. Lynn Nelson William T. Ojala Robert E. Shafer	Margaret B. Fleming John Hollowell James R. Rankin
Length of project	First summer session: five weeks, four days a week In-service workshops throughout the school year		Six weeks, four days a week Monthly meetings throughout the school year
Daily schedule	9:00 to 4:00, with an hour off for lunch		9:00 to 3:00, with an hour off for lunch
Outside activities	Social hour(s) every Thursday afternoon		Poetry reading (Dunning) Potluck dinner party Theater party
Funding	National Endowment for the Humanities through the University of California at Berkeley Participating school districts		NEH (through UCB) Amphitheater School Dist.

13

Main topics covered	Prewriting activities Invention Piaget, right/left brain theories and writing Research in composition and grammars Sentence combining Informal, personal, journal writing Modes of discourse Predication and other uses of language Methods of evaluation: holistic, primary trait Teaching stylistics Audience, voice, purpose Moffett's structure of writing and writing curriculum		Free and journal writing Invention Prewriting activities Research in rhetoric, language acquisition, etc. Sentence combining Modes of discourse Sequence in teaching writing Holistic and primary trait evaluation Generative rhetoric Change agentry Audience, voice, purpose
Guest speakers	Keith Caldwell Bill Strong James Sledd Richard Larson Richard Ohmann Frank D'Angelo Edmund Farrell Mary K. Healy Ross Winterowd	Yetta Goodman Mary K. Healy Ric Masten	Steven Dunning Jo Inman Frank O'Hare Dave Holden Yetta Goodman Brenda Even Eileen Hollowell Charles Davis
Follow-up activities	Monthly meetings of both GPAWP groups with directors Many in-service workshops Some participants have become consultants for succeeding summer institutes. One participant has become supervisor of composition for her district. Presentations at conferences		Monthly meetings of SAWP and directors Many in-service workshops Several participants have continued to meet weekly to share their writing. Presentations at conferences Directors have been given research assistants to help evaluate project.

Participants, schools, and districts

GPAWP 1978

MARY MIENKE ANDE: North H.S., Phoenix Union
KAY BENJAMIN, Kyrene J.H.S.
SANDY BOULEY, Mountain View H.S., Mesa
RALPH BRYAN, Grand Canyon College
VIRGINIA BURNS, Hohokam School, Scottsdale
CORA CRESSWELL, Greenway H.S., Glendale
PAM DAVIS, Tempe H.S.
SARA DUSENBERRY, Barcelona South, Alhambra
SHARON GAIO, Shadow Mountain H.S., Paradise Valley
JESSE HISE, Central H.S., Phoenix Union
LYNN JETT, Arizona State University
ROBIN KENDRICK, Carson J.H.S., Mesa
LINDA KINNERUP, Connolly School, Tempe
GARY MANGIN, Peoria H.S.
MARYBETH MASON, Willis J.H.S., Chandler
JANEAN McQUADE, Waggoner School, Kyrene
BEVERLY MERRILL, McKemy J.H.S., Tempe
MARTHA MITTEN, Phoenix Union H.S.
SHERELY RUBY, Judson School (private)
NADINE SHIMER, Maryvale H.S., Phoenix Union
KAREN SMITH, Phoenix Elementary
MIKE WHERLI, Tempe H.S.
RONDIE YANCEY, Chandler J.H.S.
JIM YOUNG, Ward School, Tempe

GPAWP 1979

BARBARA BENSON, Peoria H.S.
JANET BOBBETT, Curry School, Tempe
SUE ANN BRADY, Longview School, Phoenix #1
REGGIE N. COATS, Corona del Sol H.S., Tempe
CHRISTINE CONNARD, Maryvale H.S., Phoenix Union
BARBARA DICKERSON, Phoenix Union H.S.
MARY FLEMING, Valley View School, Roosevelt
DONALD HACKLING, Phoenix Country Day School
SHERRY HATTEN, Knox School, Chandler
CYNTHIA KINGMAN, Corona del Sol H.S., Tempe
JEAN KOWALSKI, Laird School, Tempe
LEONARD KOWALSKI, Connolly J.H.S., Tempe
ANNETTE LEWIS, North H.S., Phoenix Union
MARY "TIP" McDONALD, Valley View School, Roosevelt
SHERRIE MORITZ, Encanto School, Phoenix #1
GREGG A. OSTRO, Chandler H.S.
CYNTHIA RUDOLD, deAnza H.S., Tolleson
CECILIA RYAN, Independence School, Glendale
VERLA TAYLOR, Kyrene Elementary District
REGINA VINCENT, Litchfield School
JUDITH WHITNEY, South Mountain H.S. Phoenix Union

SAWP 1979

JUDITH BILLSON, Grad. student in Reading, University of Arizona
LOIS BIRD, Indian Oasis School, Sells
MARY JANE COOK, Catalina H.S., Tucson #1
THOMAS DEAN, Keeling School, Amphitheater
PAUL DUZIK, University of Arizona
SHIRLEY GUBSER, Canyon del Oro H.S., Amphitheater
JAMES HERMAN, Amphitheater H.S.
GAIL KOSLOWSKI, Amphitheater H.S.
CHERYL LOCKHART, Amphitheater H.S.
BEATRICE MAGUIRE, Keeling School, Amphitheater
GEORGE MAIRS, Canyon del Oro H.S. Amphitheater
ELSIE MANN, Marana H.S.
SUSAN MASEK, Sunnyside J.H.S., Tucson
LEE SHAINEN, University of Arizona
GERALD ROGERS, Amphitheater H.S.
RANDALL SMITH, Townsend J.H.S. Tucson #1
SHELLEY SMITH, Canyon del Oro H.S., Amphitheater

VARIATIONS ON A THEME: THE NORTHEAST TEXAS WRITING PROJECT

Glenn Irvin

The Bay Area model writing projects derive much of their effectiveness from their regional focus. In Arizona, for example, the Greater Phoenix Area Writing Project concentrates on the metropolitan area in Maricopa and adjacent counties while the Southern Arizona Project works with school districts in Tucson and the surrounding area. A project is typically housed on a college or university campus which serves as an organizational and administrative center for teacher-consultants and school districts and provides facilities for research and study in composition.

. . . THE BEST TEACHER OF TEACHERS IS ANOTHER TEACHER

But the Bay Area models also derive much of their effectiveness from adapting to local conditions. The NorthEast Texas Writing Project (NET), administered through East Texas State University in Commerce, Texas, demonstrates this unique combination of regional focus and adaptability. The NET serves both the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex and the independent school districts in rural east Texas. Although it makes no major departures from the Bay Area model, the NET exemplifies the manner in which the writing projects build upon the strengths of teachers familiar with problems peculiar to their region.

Since its size and population would make a single state department of education too cumbersome to operate efficiently, Texas has established 20 Regional Education Service Centers. These provide administrative and technical support for local school districts, offering services such as data processing, media libraries, counseling, subject matter consultants, and in-service workshops. Because of their regional focus and close relationship with local schools, the Centers make ideal locations for the writing projects.

The NET works through two such centers: Region 7 in Kilgore and Region 10 in Richardson. The Region 7 Center, in deep east Texas, serves 17 counties with 99 independent school districts containing everything from one-room schoolhouses to large, multifaceted high schools in cities such as Longview, Nacogdoches, and Tyler. During June and July of 1979, project fellows came to the institute from schools up to 130 miles from the workshop site; in fact three teachers moved to Tyler for the five-week session, and two others moved from their homes to intermediary towns closer to the workshop. Some chose to drive as much as 90 miles each way! The project directors themselves traveled 164 miles round trip from Commerce to Tyler daily.

GLENN IRVIN, a former Arizonan, is Assistant Professor in the Department of Literature and Languages at East Texas State University, Commerce, and Director of the NorthEast Texas Writing Project.

The Region 10 institute took place during the second half of the summer in Garland, a suburb of Dallas. Region 10 consists of eight counties containing rural, suburban, and urban districts. Teachers selected for this institute came mostly from Dallas and surrounding areas, although one lived in Greenville, 45 miles northeast, and two drove daily from Denison, on the Oklahoma border. The NET project directors commuted again, this time only 60 miles each way.

Why were the institutes not held in Commerce, the project headquarters? Commerce sits on the eastern edge of Region 10, but at a considerable distance from Region 7. Both Regions 7 and 10 were interested in the Bay Area Writing Project and its possibilities for Texas, and since East Texas State was trying to organize such a project, the three joined in the effort. The two service centers contributed equal portions, which were matched by the grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities through the Bay Area Writing Project. Because Regions 7 and 10 are some distance from each other, it was more practical to have the project directors drive to each site than to have all the fellows commute to Commerce. As it turned out, everyone did too much driving.

Dividing the NET into two components with separate summer institutes did have some advantages. Each Regional Center has been able to develop autonomy within the project. This began with the selection of fellows, when the Regional Centers worked with surrounding districts and the project directors, but were independent of each other. Region 7 could thus select fellows who understood the difficulties facing composition teachers in small, rural districts, while Region 10 could choose from the urban and suburban schools that dominate the area.

Naturally the fellows who participated in each five-week institute brought with them ideas and techniques to address the problems of teaching composition in their region. Although conducted by the same staff, the two workshops were distinctly different. Region 7 placed greater emphasis on motivation, free and loop writing, peer response groups, and the composing process. Formal systems of invention and classical rhetoric received some attention. Region 10 focused on student publications, journal writing, exposition, revision, and relationships between reading and writing. Behind both lay the "standard" framework of research on composing: Moffett, Macrorie sentence combining, Peter Elbow, Christensen's rhetoric, writing across the curriculum, and evaluation.

Regional adaptability carried over into in-service presentations as well. In Region 7, NET teacher-consultants were immediately involved with the August in-service every Texas teacher must attend. Prior to the opening of school they had already conducted some workshops for teachers from districts across the region. Once reports of their presentations reached other teachers and administrators, the NET was invited to offer workshops throughout the fall and spring. These activities were coordinated by the Region 7 Center in Kilgore with NET administration helping in the initial sessions.

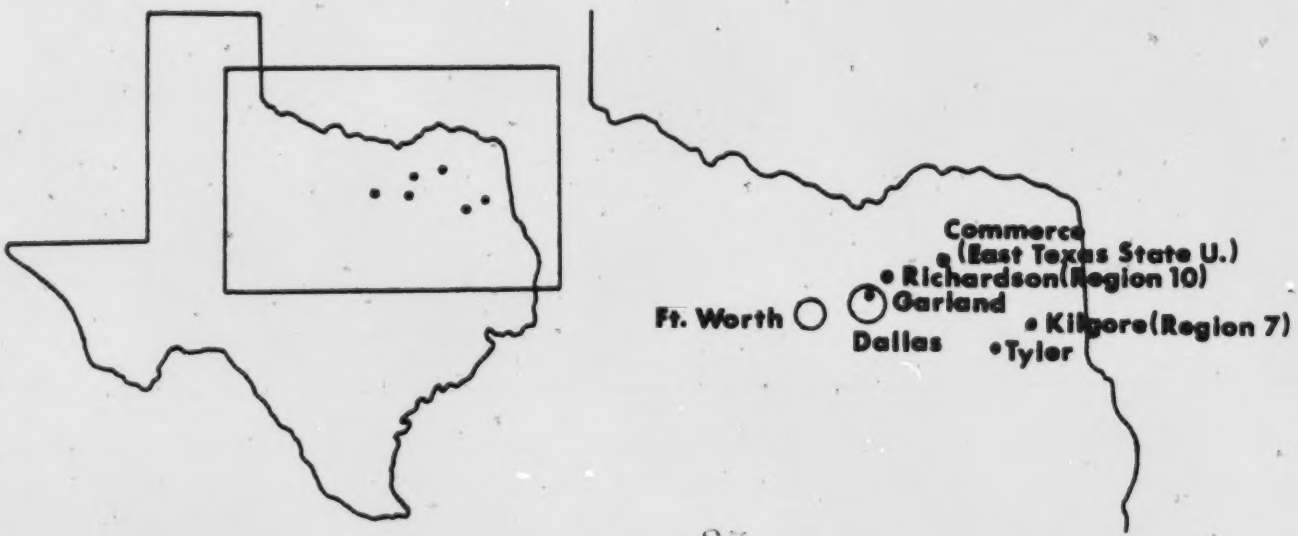
Region 10 fellows finished their summer institute only five days prior to the opening of school and so did not have the advantage of six weeks' lead time to prepare materials as did the fellows in Region 7. Nevertheless, NET teacher-consultants were involved in August in-service in their home districts, and as a result of their activities, the project is presenting workshops for several districts through the fall and spring. These are coordinated by the Region 10 Center in Richardson, again with the help of project directors.

The workshops have been entirely successful. A fundamental tenet of the Bay Area model is that the best teacher of teachers is another teacher, and certainly that has been the case in the NorthEast Texas Writing Project. Teachers had become accustomed to hearing outside consultants discuss theoretical and abstract matters during the mandatory August in-service period; now they could listen to other classroom professionals intimately acquainted with the problems faced by composition teachers in their region. For this reason, the project administration has avoided sending teacher-consultants from one region to work with teachers in another, even though this would double the available cadre for each region.

In fact, teacher-consultants from the two regions had never met until November, when the project sponsored a special appearance by Ken Macrorie. All 42 found themselves in a single room and soon discovered that they knew each other--they shared a common interest and purpose. Even more, some had been in school together, taught together, attended conferences together.

The NorthEast Texas Writing Project is vigorous and enthusiastic, much of this resulting from the adaptability of the Bay Area model. The NET holds two relatively independent units in the mesh of a single project that provides enough latitude for each region to respond to its individual needs. Two summer institutes, two locations, two groups of teacher-consultants, two regional focuses, two T-shirts, and two logos, but one set of goals.

What lies ahead? Already project teacher-consultants are recruiting prospects for the second summer institutes. Districts are asking for more in-service workshops Region 8 in Mt. Pleasant is initiating a project to begin in the summer of 1980. The Houston area is developing a project, and of course, the Austin Hill Country Project is already in its second year. With 20 Regional Education Service Centers in Texas, the writing projects have the potential to extend their influence to students and teachers across the state. And in each region, the project's adaptability will enable it to take advantage of local teachers' expertise and intimate acquaintance with problems facing composition teachers in the area.



BOSTON: THE BAY AREA MODEL IN AN URBAN SCHOOL SYSTEM

Joseph W. Check

In November, 1978, I asked myself whether the Bay Area Writing Project model could work in a multiracial, highly political, court-desegregated urban school system like Boston. Now that the Boston Writing Project is six months old and surviving, I believe that the model can be extremely successful in such a setting, provided that a few significant local adaptations are made.

I first heard of the Bay Area Writing Project (BAWP) from Ann Berthoff and James Broderick, two members of the University of Massachusetts/Boston English department who have long professional involvements with the theory and practice of the teaching of writing. They knew that the Institute for Learning and Teaching, the unit of the university for which I work, collaborated with the public schools to develop innovative in-service programs. They also knew that my academic background was in English, and they suggested that this might be a project that would interest both the school system and the university. At the request of I.L.T.'s director, Dorothy Berman, the university paid my travel expenses to enable me to observe the BAWP site directors' meeting in Kansas City the day before Thanksgiving.

As I listened to reports from each local site I became aware that most of the existing writing project sites were working with suburban school systems or with networks of small town and rural school systems. I was full of admiration for the local adaptations that had been made by sites in Northern Michigan, Nebraska, Montana, Arkansas, the Texas hill country, and South Carolina. At these sites sheer distance, weather, and population density (or lack of it) all affected the design of in-service programs. I also admired the vigorous state networks that had been built in California, Virginia, and New York. I heard little, however, that spoke directly to the problems a fledgling Boston site could be expected to face. Three aspects of the site directors' meeting made me think a Boston site could succeed. I knew I would have help from the BAWP staff of Jim Gray, Mary K. Healy, and Miles Myers, who among them have a wealth of experience, imagination, and know-how that I came to believe is equal to nearly any conceivable crisis. I knew that the excellence of the individual teachers who formed the core of projects all over the country could be matched by Boston teachers. I knew that the writing project model had demonstrated an ability to adapt to local school conditions all over the country. Two sites were undeniably urban,

> . . . THEIR FIRST OBLIGATION WAS TO RETURN TO THEIR CLASSROOMS AND BECOME BETTER TEACHERS OF WRITING.

JOSEPH W. CHECK is a member of the faculty of the Institute for Learning and Teaching at the University of Massachusetts at Boston and Director of the Boston Writing Project.

New York City and New Orleans. In conversations with the site directors, John Brereton and Elizabeth Penfield, I found that they were wrestling with some of the same problems I anticipated. I returned to Boston convinced that a Boston site was possible, that I would need help from a lot of people to get one started, and that the project would be much better off beginning slowly and building to a larger clientele than trying to do too much the first year.

With the support of Dorothy Berman and Annette Stavros of I.L.T., who contributed time, effort, and skill in program planning and proposal development; the Chancellor of the university, who supported our request for university funds; and the Boston Public Schools, which agreed to release a teacher to work as full-time co-director of the project, the Boston Writing Project moved from an idea to a near reality. The final essential piece, financial support from the Bay Area project, came from Jim Gray in June. By the time we were actually ready to recruit teachers for the summer institute, only five days of school remained.

The Boston Writing Project summer institute followed the BAWP model almost exactly. Sixteen teachers and three staff members met four days a week for four weeks. We were successful in recruiting teachers from a variety of disciplines and grade levels. Participants included three elementary, five middle, and eight high school teachers from subject areas including health, science, reading, history, and bilingual education, as well as English. Each participant made a formal presentation of a writing lesson. Two afternoons a week were devoted to small group writing, and at least once a week participants heard a presentation by an outside specialist. There was a core of required readings and a small resource library of supplementary reading. The participating teachers judged the institute a great success and, as in most of the other writing projects, participants felt the small writing groups to be the most valuable component.

Even though the summer institute was a great success, the project staff decided *not* to begin planning and implementing in-service programs immediately. Instead, we introduced an intermediate stage between the summer institute and the use of teacher-consultants in in-service programs. In order to understand why we did not begin immediately with in-service programs, it is necessary to understand some basic facts about the Boston Public Schools.

At present Boston has about 68,000 public school students. The system has nine school districts. Districts one through eight are geographical districts; district nine is a citywide "magnet" district that contains almost one-third of the entire student population. The overriding theme of the "magnet" schools, which are supposed to aid desegregation by attracting students of all races through the excellence of their educational programs, is diversity. There exists no unified language arts or English curriculum in the school system as a whole or within individual districts. What is taught and the way it is taught can vary not just from district to district or from school to school, but from classroom to classroom. The programmatic diversity of the schools is a reflection of the ethnic and racial diversity of the students who attend them. Boston is a major port of entry for a number of nationalities. The school system maintains bilingual programs in eight different languages, including Spanish, Chinese, and Cape Verdean. Like nearly all urban systems, over the past five years Boston has seen a reduction in the number of middle-class students and the number of white students and a proportionate rise in the number of poor students, non-white students, and students who are not native English speakers.

Boston teachers are extremely skeptical of any in-service program. Many have had repeated experience with workshops and courses which required their attendance, lengthened their day, and added nothing to their professional lives or to their immediate classroom repertoire. Any in-service program that hoped to gain credibility in the area of writing would have to demonstrate first that it had taken into account certain factors that affect the teaching situation in general. Some of these are:

Attendance

Like most urban systems, Boston has problems with irregular school attendance, particularly at the high school level. In addition to traditional low attendance on Mondays and Fridays, at some schools there are problems raised by frequent transfer of students into and out of a classroom, a school building, or the school system. Teachers can find significant numbers of students entering their classes at mid-term, and though a teacher's total average attendance may be good, anticipating which students will be there on which days is almost impossible.

Teacher Morale

"Teacher burnout," to use a term that has recently come into frequent use to describe a nationwide phenomenon, has among its causes in-school violence against teachers, frequent change of assignments, threats to job security as enrollments decline, a relatively low pay scale, and lack of recognition of good teaching. These problems, which affect the profession as a whole, are more intense in urban systems, and Boston is an urban system.

Proliferation of Special Programs

Many special programs, good in themselves, of necessity remove students from the regular classroom for part of the day. As such programs proliferate, teachers in the elementary and middle grades may have a whole class present for only one or two periods a day.

With these things in mind, we decided not to ask our teacher-consultants to begin working in in-service programs immediately. We felt that the Boston Writing Project made sense only as a long-term effort and that its only chance of staying alive in the long term was to build slowly from success to success. If the project were to lose credibility with teachers at the very outset by conducting in-service programs prematurely, there might not be a second chance. To begin with, we had only sixteen teachers, so there might be large gaps between what an individual school or group of schools wanted for in-service and what we could in fact supply. Second, though each of the summer participants was dedicated, highly capable, and excited about writing, they had certainly not all become master teachers in four weeks. The summer experience gave them renewed energy, a battery of new techniques, and a deepened understanding of the complexity of writing, but it did not give many of them the confidence to do what they had never done before, become teachers of teachers. Many of the summer participants told us that they felt their first obligation was to return to their classrooms and become better teachers of writing. Others took a "wait and see" attitude about new approaches. They wanted to use new techniques in their classrooms before they began telling other teachers about them.

We decided that our best strategy would be to build a support network for BWP teachers, to assist them in implementing writing programs with their classes, to keep

the momentum of the summer going, and to begin building a base for in-service workshops during the second semester. The follow-up program we are presently engaged in attempts to do these things through the following activities:

Classroom Visits

We are working with 12 of the 16 teachers on an individual basis, assisting them in implementing writing programs with their classes. The successes here have been quite remarkable—teachers are using small writing groups with elementary remedial reading classes, using learning logs and diaries, transferring elementary art and writing exercises for use with non-speakers and non-writers of English, and there has been an across-the-board acceptance of pre-writing activities. Base-building is going on within the individual schools. As fellow teachers see the effects of these techniques, the confidence of BWP teachers is growing and the potential ground for in-service programs is being prepared. During the first semester we have been striving for low-level, informal spreading of ideas within individual buildings.

Monthly Writing Groups

The strongest bond between participants during the summer was the small group writing. We have continued to meet monthly and about half of the summer participants show up each time. Though there are regulars, there are also people who drop in and out when they feel the need for support, and some teachers bring a friend. Our only rule is that whoever attends has to bring a piece of writing. Each month the summer energy gets rekindled at these peer criticism sessions.

Saturday Meetings

Three big meetings a year are held on Saturday mornings. They feature outside speakers, time for informal conversation, and an expanded guest list to publicize the project.

Newsletter

This has been sporadic, but well received. People get so much mail at school that they're conditioned to throw most of it away. Because we use the newsletter for announcements, we are sure that most of the participants don't throw it away.

We now feel that about half of the summer participants are ready to become effective teacher-consultants. In using new writing techniques in their own classrooms they have made the adjustments necessary to insure credibility. The project staff members have begun working with schools to plan in-service programs during the second half of the year. As practical questions arise, we realize that we and the prospective teacher-consultants are much better able to provide answers than we would have been in September, and that our decision to work intensively in supporting teachers in the classroom was probably the right one. The most effective in-service consists of a teacher standing in front of other teachers and saying, in effect, "I know it works because I've done it, and this is how I did it." The Bay Area model recognizes this and builds on it. The teachers in our project were not ready, in September, to conduct that kind of effective in-service. Now, half way through the year, many of them are. We have departed from the basic BAWP model only in that we have slowed

down the process and allowed some time for gestation and field-testing, which has strengthened the teacher-consultants. We have done this because we feel that, in attempting to do in-service in writing for fellow Boston teachers, they are entering a very tough arena, and they had better be good the first time out. We will continue to support them throughout the year. If we are able to raise the money to hold a second summer institute, and if those teacher-consultants are as strong as this year's, by this time next year the Boston Writing Project may be not just surviving, but thriving.

BETTER TEACHING OF WRITING:

Aim of National Meeting of CCCC, March 13-15 in Washington

Teachers who work throughout the U.S. to develop better writers will share ideas at the 1980 Convention of the Conference on College Composition and Communication, March 13-15, 1980, at the Washington Hilton, Washington, D.C. In three days of meetings, conducted by trend-setters in the teaching of composition, college and secondary school faculty members will study the writer as a person and the complex processes involved in getting ideas on paper. They will discuss better ways to use this knowledge in teaching writing.

Guest speaker for the Opening Plenary Session of the Washington Convention, at 10 a.m. on Thursday, March 13, will be Pulitzer-Prize-winning poet Maxine Kumin, author of *Up Country: Poems of New England* and *To Make a Prairie: Essays on Poets, Poetry and Country Living.* At that meeting, Frank D'Angelo, professor of English at Arizona State University and national chair of CCCC, will also speak. At the Second Plenary Session, March 13 at 7:30 p.m., the speaker will be James Britton, Goldsmiths' Professor of Education, emeritus, University of London, and director of the British study that led to publication of *The Development of Writing Abilities (11-18).*

Nearly 200 concurrent sessions arranged by program chair Lynn Quitman Troyka, Queensborough Community College, CUNY, will deal with facets of composition ranging from advanced theory to classroom methods. Six programs will focus on issues involving language and public policy, with speakers from government, citizens' action groups, and education.

For further information and registration forms for the CCCC Convention, write Information Services, NCTE, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, Illinois 61801.

DEVELOPING A WRITING PROJECT IN A RURAL COUNTY: ANATOMY OF A PROCESS

Richard L. Graves and *John C. Painter*

Our purpose here is to describe the development of a writing project in a rural Southern county. Since many of the Bay Area Writing Projects are located in metropolitan areas and deal with urban problems, we were concerned at the outset about whether or not the BAWP model could be applied to our particular situation. As a result of our experience we have come to believe that with some modifications the essential ideas of BAWP can be successfully translated and applied to the small, rural county school system.

Lee County, Alabam, covers some 612 square miles, and the county population (not counting two small incorporated towns) is 19,500. Though farms, ranches, small businesses, and mobile homes dot the countryside, most of the population (of which 27 percent are black) work in nearby mills. The most pervasive feature of Lee County, however, is the vast rolling woodland—dense forests of pine, oak, and sweet gum, interlaced with meandering creeks and narrow, winding roads. Poverty, of course, is apparent (the 1970 census places 33 percent in the poverty group), but if there is a lack of economic resources, there is no lack of pride, independence, and spirit among the people.

. . . MANY OF THEM SENSE INSTINCTIVELY
THE VITAL CONNECTION BETWEEN
WRITING AND THINKING. . . .

More than 90 percent of the children who attend Lee County schools are bused. In fact, busing is a way of life for these young people. They come to school expecting to get "an education," which is generally interpreted as competence for life's work rather than cultural development. Consequently, both the children and their parents give a fairly high priority to the skill of writing (behind football and hunting, of course!). Though unable to articulate it precisely, they see a practical value to the skills of editing and composing. Also, many of them sense instinctively the vital connections between writing and thinking. For the most part, a writing project whose chief aim is to improve the competence of the students and the instructional skills of the teachers is welcomed by both the school and the community.

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A glimpse of the reading profile of Lee County students is instructive. In 1976 the California Achievement Test showed that eleventh graders were at the 7.0 level in language and the 8.0 level in reading. The same test administered in 1978 showed that approximately 65 percent of all eighth graders were more than one year behind in reading skill. Before the development of the Writing Project, little information was available about the writing skills of the students.

In the fall of 1978, the Lee County School System faced a major decision in its planning for Title IV-C funds. The choice was between a hastily thrown together proposal which would seek a maximum amount of funds and a small planning grant of $10,000. The Assistant Superintendent of Instruction and the Federal Programs Director agreed that the planning grant was the best choice. It could become a vehicle by which the System could carefully plan and analyze its major educational improvement needs. After a series of brainstorming sessions with SDE federal programs representatives, central staff instructional members, principals, and teachers, the overwhelming consensus was to focus on a single basic skill area. Specifically, the decision was to draft a planning grant proposal showing that the forgotten "R," Writing and the Composing Process, is truly forgotten in Lee County. The construction of a long-term federal proposal centered on using support funds to plan and implement an instructional program dealing with teaching and managing basic skill development. Finally, the vision of County personnel was to discover a meaningful *collaborative process* as the vehicle for its development of a planning grant and proposal. Thus, the stage was set for the adoption of the Bay Area Writing Project's model of *cooperatively planned university-school programs*.[1]

From the outset the writing project involved three agencies: the local school system, a nearby university, and the State Department of Education. The single most important feature of the project, and cornerstone on which it is built, is the quality of the relationships among these three parties. It is imperative that a spirit of *mutual trust and cooperation* be established. All parties have a contribution to make; all must view themselves as equal partners in an important and worthwhile venture. Since the rural school is smaller and the number of teachers involved is fewer, we believe the opportunity for deeper and more permanent human relations is possible.

The Steering Committee

Several teachers were invited to form a Steering Committee for the project. In all, some ten teachers were finally chosen. The criteria for their selection were:

1. Good geographical distribution--no more than one teacher per school.
2. Mixture of elementary and secondary teachers.
3. Two years of successful teaching experience for each member.
4. Demonstrated leadership within the teacher's school.
5. Approval by the building principal and director of instruction.
6. Willingness to serve in a professional project.

The Steering Committee proved to be an invaluable part of the collaborative planning team. It became the major in-house mechanism for obtaining a comprehensive profile of the status of written composition in the County schools. Funds were

budgeted for substitute teachers in order to obtain released time for the Steering Committee. The following is a list of major activities conducted by the Steering Committee:

1. Assisted in obtaining writing samples from over 1,000 students.
2. Helped analyze and synthesize writing samples.
3. Disseminated an individual diagnostic survey to Lee County teachers and administrators in order to evaluate their training background in teaching composition.
4. Participated in the development of actual goals and objectives of the IV-C proposal.
5. Served as full team leaders in the entire cooperative planning process, especially within their respective schools.

The documentation of the need for a writing project came from two sources: (1) an analysis of a sample of the students' writing and (2) a determination of the teachers' professional training in teaching composition. In both instances the Steering Committee played a significant role. Believing that the sample of student writing must be comprehensive, it gathered samples of writing from approximately 1,000 students in grades three through twelve. Members of the Steering Committee secured the assistance of teachers in their respective schools and made sure the writing was done under uniform conditions.

Analysis of the student writing covered the following categories:

1. Quantitative analysis (including number of words, mean T-Unit length, mean clause length, and subordination ratio)
2. Errors in mechanics (spelling, capitalization, punctuation)
3. Usage errors
4. Syntactic errors (described by Mina Shaughnessy in *Errors and Expectations* as "derailed sentences")

Analysis of the teachers' preparation for teaching composition was straightforward. We simply asked the teachers (again through the Steering Committee) to describe and evaluate their undergraduate training program, identifying any techniques, strategies, activities, and the like that they acquired in their undergraduate program and have since found valuable. If there were any deficiency, it would show up as a criticism of the professional program, not of the teachers themselves.

In conclusion we want to mention the help we have received from several sources. It was our good fortune to attend, along with members of the Steering Committee, a conference on literacy that stressed written communication. We heard from people such as Walter J. Ong, Edward P. J. Corbett, Frank D'Angelo, E. D. Hirsch, Jr., James Sledd, and others. It was our further good fortune to have advice from people who had been involved in writing projects: Don Gallehr at George Mason University; Betty Blaisdell, Director of English in Fairfax County, Virginia; Sam Watson and Leon Gatlin at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. We have been especially gratified by the support and encouragement of Jim Gray at Berkeley.

At present we are working on the large proposal for the writing project. Of course, we do not know now what the outcome of our labor will be. Whether it is funded or not, however, we will always look back on the process of working together as a valuable learning experience in itself.

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[1]Jim Gray uses the phrase "model of cooperatively planned university/school programs" in Mary Lee Glass, "A Look at the Bay Area Writing Project," California English, Vol. 11, No. 4 (September 1975).

NEW REFERENCE BOOK EXPLAINS LANGUAGE OF MODERN RHETORIC

Since the advent of the new rhetorics, the study of composition has undergone an explosion in terminology. New terms have proliferated, until teachers, researchers, and students are hard pressed to keep up with the language of their field.

A Handbook of Modern Rhetorical Terms, just published by the National Council of Teachers of English, is a concise guide to the current language of rhetoric and is designed for ready reference. Drawing upon the literature in the field, its author, Linda Woodson of Texas Tech University, has compiled over 300 current rhetorical terms, with their definitions, bibliographic information on their primary sources in the works of major rhetoricians, and examples of how they are used in context. Not only scholars, but also general readers who attempt to follow current thinking in rhetoric will find the *Handbook* a valuable aid.

Price: $3.30; NCTE members $3.00. NCTE Stock No. 20199.

A WRITING PROJECT AND IN-SERVICE ACTIVITY

Alan N. McLeod and John S. Oehler

The impact of writing projects modeled after the Bay Area project may not be easily measured with hard data, but the spirit of collaboration generated among university and K-12 faculty may more readily be perceived. Our experience with this endeavor has been reasonably encouraging.

In 1978, representatives of six universities in Virginia worked with the Virginia Department of Education, its Title IV-C office, and representatives from public schools to prepare a plan to address the issue of strengthening the teaching of writing in this state. Major considerations in developing this plan were to steer away from "reinventing the wheel" and to model the best approaches for in-service education. The National Writing Project offered a tested program based upon a sound collaborative approach to in-service education and was adopted as a plan for Virginia. That plan was eventually funded in part by Title IV-C; the balance by the participating universities, primarily through in-kind services, and participating school divisions, mainly through tuition payments. In the summer of 1979, writing institutes were conducted at all six sites (College of William and Mary, George Mason University, University of Virginia, Virginia Commonwealth University, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, and Virginia State University). Since then the sites have each conducted follow-up in-service activities in different ways. Continued Title IV-C, university, and school district funding is anticipated for the next two years.

. . . THE STRENGTHS OF THE WRITING PROJECT PROGRAM ARE IN THE SUSTAINED RELATIONSHIPS DEVELOPED BETWEEN UNIVERSITIES AND SCHOOL DISTRICTS.

While the directors of the six sites and state department representatives meet to plan the overall direction of the Virginia Writing Project, each site is provided latitude, within the principles of the National Project, to attempt to address the concerns of the schools and teachers in its region. The Virginia Commonwealth University site is designated the Capital Writing Project. Participants for the institute and in-service work are drawn from the Richmond metropolitan area and surrounding school districts. The schools in this region represent rather distinctively urban, suburban, and rural populations. There are, of course, many similarities with respect to language and writing concerns among all the school districts, which is par-

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ticularly helpful in implementing the institute; particular concerns that warrant more attention in some school districts than in others are addressed more specifically through in-service work. All school divisions, for example, are interested in the writing process, attention to audience and purpose, and strategies for teaching. Some school divisions, however, are concerned about teaching writing to students who, for the most part, are speakers of nonstandard dialects; other school divisions may not have that concern as a high priority because of the population served.

It is our perception that the strengths of the writing project program are in the sustained relationships developed between universities and school districts leading to in-service work, and also the use of teachers to work with their peers on teaching writing. This strength is somewhat inhibited because many teachers concerned with teaching writing do not avail themselves of the opportunity to participate in in-service activities on writing and the teaching of writing. Our experience suggests that among the reasons for a low participation rate is a fear of exposing one's own writing and a sense that one is inadequate in writing ability either because of lack of preparation or experience. Other reasons may be a sense that one already knows how to teach writing or can gain this knowledge through reading in the professional literature about writing. A feeling that one already teaches writing well, or that there is not sufficient time to participate in the in-service activity may be other factors inhibiting participation.

There are those teachers who overcome misgivings or who sense the assistance that can be gained by participation in institutes or in-services. They are often teachers who are not only concerned about the teaching of writing but also have experiences and ideas that contribute to the growth of other teachers as teachers of writing.

During the fall semester, we have conducted two in-service writing courses, one in a predominantly suburban school district, one in a school district that is substantially rural. In the spring, in-service courses will be conducted in an urban school district and a rural one. These in-service courses are semester-long, have elements of the summer institute (writing groups, writing process, and the like), and are addressed as much as possible to the perceived "needs" of the teachers and school district involved. Teacher-consultants, drawn from the institute, conduct several of the class sessions. One university professor is responsible for the entire course: plans the course with the school district, selects teacher-consultants based on the topics requested by the district and participants, and teaches or conducts many of the sessions.

Teacher-consultants are also engaged by their home schools and divisions to lead short-term in-service activities on writing. The comments received thus far are highly laudatory of teacher-consultants, whether the in-service is done in the home school or district or as part of a semester course. Just as peer teaching often works well at any school level, so does such teaching work among professionals. Few teachers, K-university, would pretend to have the answers related to effective writing instruction, but in sharing information, strategies, and concerns, all may learn more effective means of teaching writing and gain security about their own writing abilities.

THE NATIONAL WRITING PROJECT

Anne Ruggles Gere

It all began with the Bay Area Writing Project. When James Gray and his staff persuaded the National Endowment for the Humanities that the Bay Area Writing Project exemplified a successful model of in-service education for writing teachers, a model that could be replicated throughout the country, the National Writing Project began to develop. Of course the sites that sprang up in places like North Dakota and New York didn't have the name National Writing Project attached to them. They had names like the Prairie Writing Project or the Capital District Writing Project. Each of these projects received some initial funding from NEH via the Bay Area Project, and each adopted the basic assumptions upon which the Bay Area Writing Project was founded: (1) in their classroom experiences teachers have gained valuable knowledge, which they can and should share with their peers; (2) teachers learn best from one another; (3) teachers of writing should themselves write. Visits from the Bay Area Project staff helped insure that each developing site conformed to the general shape of the Berkeley model, but each director developed a program to fit local needs.

. . . THE EFFECTS OF PARTICULAR TEACHING STRATEGIES, SURVEYS OF AMOUNTS AND KINDS OF EXISTING WRITING INSTRUCTION, AND LONGITUDINAL STUDIES OF GROUPS OF STUDENTS ARE AMONG THE RESEARCH EFFORTS ALREADY INITIATED . . . .

Now, after a little more that four years, 67 sites have developed in 31 states. Each site has replicated the general shape of the Bay Area Project model and has, at the same time, retained an individual character. Projects lack uniformity on the degree of follow-up work during the academic year, the amount and kind of in-service work provided by teacher-consultants, and the university-school-state-professional organization relationships developed. Funding structures and sources differ, the number of university credits offered varies, and no two project directors agree on the best way to structure the details of a summer institute. Yet, this confederacy of projects retains commitment to the original assumptions on which all projects were founded, and out of this confederacy the National Writing Project was born.

Until November, 1979, the most visible symbol of the National Writing Project was the *NWP Newsletter* and the uniform mailings "To Project Directors" that emanated

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from Berkeley. Project Directors received lists of their counterparts in other areas and began to exchange ideas and materials. This informal network became more formalized with the formation of the National Writing Project Advisory Board. The weekend before the annual NCTE convention in San Francisco, Eugene Garber from Albany, New York, Don Gallehr from Fairfax, Virginia, Ben Nelms from Columbia, Missouri, Keith Tandy from Moorhead, North Dakota, Leslie Whipp from Lincoln, Nebraska, and this Seattle, Washington, resident gathered in Berkeley for a two-day meeting. Two central tasks faced the Advisory Board: (1) to explore ways of implementing current NWP projects and (2) to help shape the future of the NWP, to think about what the NWP might look like in 1985.

Among current NWP projects considered by the Advisory Board were a regional exchange program whereby teacher-consultants from one project could visit other sites within a several-state region. The Board agreed on an arrangement similar to NCTE's co-sponsored speaker plan whereby the NWP office and individual projects will share costs of teacher-consultants' travel. This regional exchange will be facilitated by directories of outstanding teacher-consultants from each project. NWP funds will be available to project sites wishing to purchase video tape stock. Several projects have found video an effective means of conveying information on classroom practices such as peer evaluation, but not all sites are able to afford tapes. Video tapes may be used in conjunction with the regional exchange program; a prospective teacher-consultant might send video demonstrations to projects within the region or use video illustrations of strategies discussed.

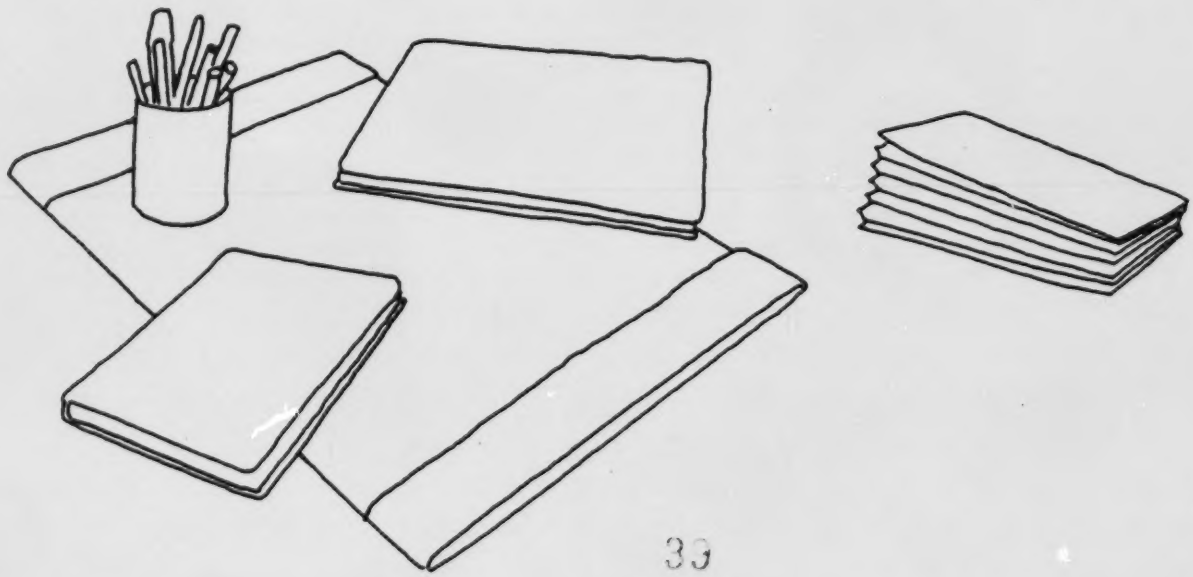
A considerable amount of the Advisory Board's attention was directed to the question of NWP publications. The person-to-person and "hands-on" nature of the project model makes media dissemination, whether in printed or video form, a complicated question. How can the credibility of the "real teacher" be preserved in a book or article? How can video productions avoid "washing out" the very elements that give life to a teacher's presentation? All projects face variations of this dissemination question. Summer institutes cannot accommodate the many teachers who would like to participate, and while they have great value, in-service programs during the school year cannot substitute for the intense summer experience. What the NWP faces is an enlarged version of the same problem. Nineteen states have no NWP sites, and even one or more projects in a state cannot begin to reach all the teachers who want and/or need help with writing instruction. Dissemination through print and video provides one means of reaching this wider audience. Although the Advisory Board did not find any easy answers, it did agree that publications representing NWP are possible and desirable. Details of these publications, publications to supplement the existing monograph series, will be developed in coming months.

Questions of funding, growth, research, and new directions dominated the Advisory Board's discussion of NWP's future. The National Endowment for the Humanities has been very generous with both start-up and continuation funds for project sites, but such funding cannot continue indefinitely. All project sites face the question of where to find money to continue their work in coming years, and the Advisory Board will continue, in coming years, to explore alternatives for funding. One promising note comes from the National Diffusion Network, which has certified the Rutgers/New Jersey Writing Project as exemplary. This certification can lead to new funding sources. A three-year evaluation of the Bay Area Writing Project funded by the Carnegie Corporation and directed by Michael Scriven has just been completed, and the results of this evaluation should contribute to NWP's certification as an exemplary program by the National Diffusion Network.

The topic of research led members of the Advisory Board to consider both documentation of projects' successes and further investigation of the writing process. While the Scriven report affirms NWP projects, citing them as "the best option available," other kinds of documentation would be helpful. The difficulty of showing the direct effect of staff development programs upon student learning is not limited to the NWP; it remains one of the pressing problems of educational research generally. As Michael Scriven noted in his presidential address to the AERA, existing research models may not be adequate for the complexities of measuring what occurs in the classroom. Projects in the NWP, with their established university-school relationships, are in an ideal position to accomplish important educational research. Teacher-consultants and project directors alike need to devise new ways to evaluate what happens in the classroom. Research in written composition is still, according to many researchers, in its infancy, and NWP sites can contribute to its growth. Small-scale studies that examine the effects of particular teaching strategies, surveys of amounts and kinds of existing writing instruction, and longitudinal studies of groups of students are among the research efforts already initiated by project sites. The NWP hopes to coordinate and disseminate these and other similar efforts.

New directions of the NWP remain largely speculative, and given the individualistic nature of existing projects, the directions will never be monolithic. Whatever the NWP becomes in future years, it will never be a completely uniform set of projects adhering to an established orthodoxy. Writing across the curriculum remains a growing concern of NWP members, and with this concern comes the possibility of adapting the NWP model to other subject areas.

Although the formation of a Board of Advisors and thus a more discernible structure for the National Writing Project signals a new unity for all projects associated with NWP, the loose confederacy of individualistic approaches will endure. Project directors will continue to disagree about how much and what kind of writing should be asked of teachers participating in a summer institute, and philosophical debates about writing instruction will continue. The NWP serves as a forum for the continuing debate as it continues its primary function--fostering better writing instruction across the country.



RESEARCH ON TEACHER BEHAVIOR DURING IN-SERVICE EDUCATION

Dan Donlan

The Inland Area Writing Project, Riverside and San Bernardino Counties' prototype model of the Bay Area Writing Project, has, for the past three years, been attempting to assess the effects of summer training programs on teachers of written composition. Like most intensive in-service summer projects, the IAWP workshops have not been equally effective with all teachers. With continual research, we hope to discover why some teachers benefit from in-service education and others don't.

Background of the Project

IAWP's first summer workshop was in 1977. Twenty-five of the Inland Area's top English teachers were selected to participate. The consequences of bringing twenty-five high-powered teachers together for five weeks are obvious: much is discussed, much is done, and much is felt. The "feelings" were our major concern. These "feelings" tended to cluster around certain problems:

1. Do the inexperienced teachers in the group have the same authority as experienced teachers?
2. Should the Summer Project attempt to establish a "way" of teaching composition?
3. Should the Summer Project participants determine the direction of the in-service education or should the Project directors do it?

...DISCOVERY LEARNING...MAY BE A MORE PALATABLE ALTERNATIVE IN IN-SERVICE EDUCATION.

These "feelings" were most dramatic during the last week of the 1977 Project when some participants "felt" nothing had been accomplished and other participants "felt" the project had been a total success. Who were the dissidents? Were they young, unguided teachers making their way hesitantly through their first few years of teaching; or were they seasoned tacticians, sure of themselves and unbudgeable? Or were the dissidents those teachers who wanted to be told what to do, who could not countenance ambiguity? We decided to investigate these issues during the 1978 Summer Program.

Research Design

The 1978 Summer Workshop enrolled 24 participants. Stratified by years of experience, the 24 teachers were randomly assigned to two in-service programs.

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Program A was a "course model," in which teachers were given a syllabus of class topics, required readings, and specific writing assignments. Although the teachers in Program A gave demonstrations of their best lessons, the actual demonstrations were scheduled according to the class topics on the syllabus. In effect, Program A was structured—with a beginning, a middle, and an end. The instructor's role was to dispense knowledge.

Program B, on the other hand, was an "open instruction model," in which teachers directed their own learning: there were no syllabi, no required readings, no specific writing assignments. Teachers in Program B gave demonstrations upon group consensus. In effect, if Program B were to have a beginning, a middle, and an end, the participants would have to develop them. The instructor's role was to facilitate the group's desires.

The program ran for five weeks. During that time, we randomly selected three ten-minute periods of class time to observe each Program. A modified FIA (Flanders Interaction Analysis) was used to determine whether the Program models were remaining distinct. As expected, Program A exhibited a majority of instructor talk and a minority of participant talk. As expected, Program B exhibited a minority of instructor talk and a majority of participant talk.

Three instruments were used to determine the effects of the program upon the participants. The first instrument, the *Methodology Inventory* (Donlan, 1979), was a 76-item list of teaching behaviors related to teaching composition, with a four-point scale: frequently, occasionally, seldom, not at all. This was administered in July, 1978, and again in May, 1979. The second instrument was a *participation inventory* of 18 behaviors in group discussion and problem solving (from Litsey, 1969). This was administered in August of 1978 in the following way: the participants rated their own performance during the Summer Workshop; in addition, the instructors rated the participants, using the same instrument. The third instrument was a *program evaluation inventory:* 25 program variables, to be rated on a four-point scale—excellent, good, adequate, inadequate. In addition to the three instruments, participants maintained daily logs that were collected and analyzed.

Findings

We found some intriguing differences in the data we collected from experienced teachers as opposed to inexperienced teachers. With regard to the pre-test/post-test of the Methodology Inventory, we discovered that, one year after the Project, experienced teachers tended to engage in *fewer behaviors* than they did prior to the Project. The inexperienced teachers tended to engage in *more behaviors*. The implications aren't clear. The Project may have had differential effects—it caused experienced teachers to *focus* on fewer behaviors, while causing inexperienced teachers to *expand* their repertoires of teaching behaviors. Or what the instrument may be showing is "natural regression": teachers may *naturally* expand their teaching repertoires to a certain point, then begin to focus on fewer techniques that have proved successful.

With regard to the Litsey scale, experienced teachers tended to rank themselves consistently *lower* than their instructors ranked them. Inexperienced teachers tended to rank themselves consistently *higher* than their instructors ranked them. Again, the implications aren't clear. Perhaps experienced teachers tend to be more critical of their own contributions than do inexperienced teachers.

With regard to the program evaluation, experienced teachers tended to rate the Project consistently *higher* than did their less experienced counterparts. Perhaps, with a highly select group of effective teachers, an intensive in-service program may be less threatening to a seasoned teacher than to a relatively inexperienced teacher.

Again, we found interesting differences in the data we collected from Program A participants as opposed to Program B participants. With regard to the pre-test/post-test of the Methodology Inventory, we found that one year after the Project, teachers from the open-instruction group were *focusing* more than were teachers from the course model. This tentatively suggests that the open-instruction model may have had a stronger effect on changing teaching behavior.

With regard to the Litsey scale, teachers from the open-instruction model tended to agree *more closely* with their instructors' evaluations than did their course model counterparts. Perhaps the problem-solving nature of open-instruction causes participants to be more sensitive to how they are contributing to the process of learning.

With regard to the program evaluation, teachers from the open-instruction model tended to evaluate the program *consistently higher* than did the teachers from the course-model program, despite evidence in their logs that the "openness" was causing them grief, doubt, and frustration. This finding, borne out by the Rand studies (McLaughlin and Berman, 1977), strongly suggests that teachers prefer to influence the direction of their own in-service education.

Conclusions

We would tentatively suggest that Writing Projects may be of differential value to experienced as opposed to inexperienced teachers. In addition, we feel that, for teachers, discovery learning, as opposed to information acquisition, may be a more palatable alternative in in-service education.

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CHANGES THAT MATTER

Billie Thompson

As a nonparticipant observer of the Greater Phoenix Area Writing Project's 1978 Summer Institute, I studied the changes that occurred in sixteen participating teachers. My study continued throughout the following school year and was based on Rokeach's theory that there are levels of change in adult behavior, ranging from superficial fad following to lasting reorientation of one's values or goals.

Rokeach suggests that while it is very easy to influence behavior in superficial ways--such as persuading people to buy a new product or adopt a new teaching text--changes of the sort that require rethinking of one's basic outlook are rare among adults. And yet I believe that the latter are the changes that matter--to teachers--and are the kinds of changes that took place in the Greater Phoenix Area Writing Project teachers.

I chose an evaluation of teacher change in the Writing Project as the subject of my doctoral dissertation because it seemed to me that the BAWP model is particularly promising as a way of bringing about the changes that matter. I doubt that anyone in the education profession knows of any teaching gimmick that is so marvelous he or she can say, "Do this instead of anything else and you will be successful." Instead of giving teachers supposedly foolproof fads to follow, it seemed to me the Writing Project was attempting something more. By exposing them to many teaching ideas, to a discussion of theory and practice, and to an examination of their own writing processes, the Project attempted to turn them into the finest kinds of professionals: people who can go on learning, inventing, applying, evaluating any number of approaches to teaching writing.

"...MUCH OF WHAT I'VE BEEN DOING FOR THE MANY YEARS I'VE TAUGHT WRITING HAS PROBABLY BEEN HARMFUL TO...MY STUDENTS...."

I have come to believe that the changes I observed in my study of the Writing Project teachers were deep and significant ones for many of these teachers. I have a variety of measures, formal and informal, which reveal that teacher participants experienced these changes in themselves as people, as teachers of writing, as writers, as teachers of teachers. A review of the literature suggests that such changes

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are not common goals for in-service programs, which usually aim to change only specific and narrowly defined behaviors rather than attempt to change attitudes, self-concepts, or role definition.

Although the changes I observed went beyond a mere shift in preference for one set of teaching techniques over another, they included such shifts. The changes in preferred teaching approaches were inevitable, of course, as a result of changing attitudes, specifically the change from seeing the teacher's role as primarily concerned with evaluating what students produce. After the workshop, teachers were more concerned with their role in instructing and facilitating the process that leads to production.

I assessed shifts in preference for particular methods before and after training, using an index of particular teaching methods that I sorted into several categories. I found that teachers increased their use of methods emphasizing fluency, student attitudes, quality of writing, improvement in student-teacher relations, and, finally, methods of evaluating finished student work.

The teachers also reported decreasing use of methods that separated learning of mechanics from composing whole discourses, as well as other methods identified as traditional, such as writing literary criticism. In general they decreased use of methods that emphasized instruction in given forms of writing over efforts to increase fluency and voice.

To some extent the shift in choice of methods reflected changes in basic attitudes, and I was especially interested in what changed those attitudes. Several separate measures, formal and informal, reveal a combination of factors:

- the experience of writing and sharing one's writing with peers
- the supportive and intense personal interaction fostered by five weeks of daily work, discussion, and socializing with a group of fellow professionals
- the presentations of specific practices by other teachers and guests

I was able to analyze quantitatively some of the aspects of a presentation that might account for a teacher's decision to adopt a particular new method. The results of a daily survey of teachers' preferences for particular methods they had heard presented that day suggests that the following factors may be influential:

- appropriateness to grade level
- the teacher's assessment of the presentation's appeal to others in the group (suggesting a generally popular and effective speaker, as opposed to some particularly appropriate content)
- possibility that the method will satisfy an existing goal or create awareness of a new goal
- compatibility with one's own student population, needs, classroom methods
- compatibility with available resources, including time and materials
- compatibility with one's own teaching style and personal interests
- compatibility with one's own instructional goals or those of one's district

- measurability of outcome
- acceptance of the presenter as an authority

Responses to particular presentations, or the decision to adopt particular new methods, is not the whole story, however. More striking are the reported changes in what teacher-consultants believe about themselves, about others, about writing, and about the teaching of writing.

The following statements from interviews and position papers exemplify the kinds of changes teachers reported:

> *...For the last eight...years I have not really bothered to research the latest materials, techniques, methods or even read up on the ever-changing field of teaching composition.*
> *...I have likewise done nothing to encourage creativity in my students but instead have discouraged those who dared to be different by imposing rigid (if not impossible) standards which if violated would result in a low grade! ...I haven't really bothered to do anything different either for myself or my students or both because I suppose I lacked confidence, know-how, and any encouragement from my colleagues who, for the most part, continually reinforced my negative attitudes and low expectations....* (High school teacher)

> *I have learned that here at the university...we are highly respected people, and I don't think I ever had that feeling before.* (High school teacher)

> *One of the things that the Writing Project taught me was to trust other people to understand the things that I do in the classroom.... I have found out that I am not unique, that I do care... about kids, but so do a lot of other teachers....*(High school teacher)

> *I can see now how my poor attitude toward writing was the result of my poor teaching techniques. I made poor assignments; I made them too long and I made too few. I gave too much instruction in a room that was too tense. I never used pre-writing techniques to prime my students. Because of my poor attitude, my students had a poor attitude.* (High school teacher)

> *Probably the most important idea, for me, has been that students need to write far more than the teacher can possibly evaluate. The analogy about the piano teacher who would never think of monitoring student practice sessions will be a part of my credo from now on.* (High school teacher)

> *What did I learn? I guess I became aware...that there are different ways of doing the same thing. You can achieve your goal in a lot of different ways.* (Elementary teacher)

> *One thing that I learned certainly was that if there is a trend or a kind of meeting of the minds from the group, it is out of a*

concern for fluency, for getting things on paper....There is probably...disagreement, of course, but most of us are now against any extreme correction until fluency is achieved.... [I now feel] a strong opposition to teaching of grammar except when it can be very carefully integrated into the writing itself....Many of these people have to teach it anyway. They do not have any choice. It is built into their program and...they object;...they don't think it is getting them where they need to go. (College teacher)

As a further indication that the program demanded more than superficial adoption of new gimmicks, we hear the voice of one teacher who is not sure she can alter as much as she now believes she should:

What I have come to realize in the past few weeks is that I don't practice what I preach, and that much of what I've been doing for the many years I've taught writing has probably been harmful to many of my students. Needless to say, this is a very painful recognition to come to, and it is even more distressing to confess that I am not sure that I can change my teaching sufficiently to help a large number of them. The ways I am accustomed to teaching writing grow out of my personality, my teaching style, and my attitudes toward students and writing that are so deeply ingrained they will be very difficult to alter. (High school teacher)

Perhaps the most striking evidence of basic changes in teachers' attitudes toward themselves and their jobs came when I examined their responses to questions about the causes of the so-called writing crisis. At the beginning, and again at the end of the program, I asked teachers why students don't write better than they do.

At the beginning of the program teachers blamed every conceivable external factor, naming *only* things over which they have little or no control:

- too much television watching
- a decline in the use of writing in our society
- social despair, dislocation, broken families, loss of faith in the future
- overcrowded classes, insufficient resources for teaching
- lack of confidence in the schools, lack of parental support

After the program, teachers dramatically shifted their attention to factors over which they *did* have control:

- students need more guidance during the writing process
- teachers need to know more about what demands have been made on students before, and what they will be asked to do after this year with them
- students need practice in writing without grades or criticism, to gain fluency and confidence, and to use writing to discover ideas

- students need guided practice in revising
- students need responses from more, different audiences
- teachers need to have realistic and higher expectations for their students
- teachers need to develop writing assignments carefully, with a clearer idea of what they expect students to do and to learn

This change alone may justify the costs of such a program. Teachers had moved from the role of victims attempting to carry out an impossible assignment. They had moved toward becoming professionals, interested in and capable of rising to the challenges of their chosen task, eager to accept responsibility for what happens to student writers because they have a clearer notion of how to fulfill that responsibility.

Although not all teachers will be able to implement all the new ideas; although most teachers will require time before they fully replenish their repertoires with "better assignments" or find all the additional audiences they might, or provide more and better guidance for prewriting and rewriting; although practical changes will not be instant, most of these teachers appear to have adopted a critically different view of themselves, of their profession, and of their students. Since it is a view that encourages them to take an active problem-solving approach to a job that was once a game of hit-or-miss, inspiration and despair, I can only believe it is a change for the better.

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CUTTING CORDS AND CLIMBING LADDERS

A CRITIQUE OF PRE AND POST "PHILOSOPHY OF COMPOSITION" PAPERS BY WRITING WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

Eunice H. Sims

"I like what happened to me and I'm not through assimilating it."
Linda Merkle, Class of '78

What happened to Linda was the summer invitational workshop of the Southeast Center for the Teaching of Writing. Linda, along with 24 other teachers at all levels--elementary through college--discovered new ways to write and to look at writing.

...PROSAIC AND SPIRITLESS IN THEIR JUNE PAPERS, THEY BREATHED FUN AND EXCITEMENT INTO THEIR AUGUST PRESENTATIONS.

The changes were made explicit in pre and post expository essays entitled, "My Philosophy of Composition," which participants were requested to write prior to their attendance at the workshop and one month following their completion of the workshop. The papers were carefully read by three readers, and a critique concerning each paper was written. These critiques were reviewed in a search for those traits that appeared to change from pre to post writing experiences. A second review was made to determine which traits seemed indicative of a majority of the participants at each level.

The review indicated that upper grade level teachers wrote with excellent organization but little creativity in June, while elementary teachers displayed some originality but comparatively little organization or depth. By August, college teachers were displaying sophisticated thought in well-organized essays.

College teachers usually began their June papers with generalizations, often in scholarly terms with no interest-catching appeal. By August, the papers were introduced with lively, original images. One of these teachers began her June essay with "My basic premise about writing is closely related to what I believe about thinking." She then enlarged on the analogy. Her August paper began with a presentation of a brief episode illustrating the quality of appropriateness, which she wished to emphasize in teaching the concept of audience in writing. Part of that opening description read, "In the crowded auditorium sat twenty-five...writing workshop students. They had exchanged discourse daily with Carolyn, but only on an informal, conversation level.... This occasion, however, demanded perfect control. Welcoming so honored a guest as Gwendolyn Brooks demanded graciousness and respect; the intellectual level of the audience in this auditorium demanded a cultured and scholarly tone by the speaker. Carolyn introduced the speaker with complete appropriateness

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for the occasion.... Such appropriateness is demanded of writers as well as of speakers."

Another college teacher departed from the formal use of third-person "one" in her earlier paper to the comfortable use of "I" to express her changed convictions in August. In speaking of the advantages of peer evaluations she wrote, "Too often I think my students not only feed me what they think I want to hear, but couch their ideas in high-flown diction, achieving not elegant expression but a pompous pseudo-academese (if that's not a word, it should be) in which their own voices become hopelessly muffled and muddled." Yet another teacher, ending her June paper with a pedagogical statement relating the importance of her professional role "to the importance to the student of facility of prose composition," concluded her August paper with these tongue-in-cheek comments: "In this essay I have expressed freely exactly what I wanted to communicate. With no outline, I have now come to the end of a five-paragraph essay. One writer's strait jacket is another's life preserver."

In contrast to the college teachers, those at the elementary level frequently wrote in a rambling, disorganized manner in June. However, by August, their writing had acquired a more sophisticated style. From banal opening statements and random comments, their writing evolved into mature organization, varied sentence structure, and vital word choices. One teacher, whose early paper had begun with a trite generality and had proceeded with poor organization and uninspired style, titled her August paper, "Encouraging Composition in the Classroom, or Grammarian, Spare That Story," and began with the provocative question, "How can I help this student want to write?" She demonstrated organized thinking throughout the paper and posed an interesting contrast between teacher practices in the teaching of reading and the teaching of writing. "We don't put red marks all over a child's first reading book to indicate which words he mispronounced. Why then should we feel compelled practically to obliterate a piece of creative writing with slashes from a red pen?"

Endings of papers also became stronger. This change is reflected in the endings of the papers of one teacher as she attempted to express the role of the teacher in the writing process. Her June paper states, "The role of the teacher is that of a facilitator, helping the child record his experiences with clarity." How much more vivid is the same general idea written in August: "Perhaps, if we work with sequences and allow young children to express themselves freely in their writings, the teaching of writing would no longer be a task, but would be as natural as a child's own speech."

Another teacher who showed great awareness of specific and colorful detail, but tended toward wordiness in her first paper, wrote a more succinct presentation of her philosophy in August. Others, who wrote quite good initial papers, displayed expertise in incorporating their new ideas and feelings gained in the workshop into their original philosophies. Successes in revision and rewriting!

Teachers at the middle and high school levels also demonstrated changes in their writing style. Generally prosaic and spiritless in their June papers, they breathed fun and excitement into their August presentations. One young teacher at the middle school level wrote an eleven-page typewritten treatise on the teaching of writing as his initial paper. It is a good paper, full of staunchly presented valid convictions, but it is unnecessarily long to convey the ideas presented. His August paper is much shorter, written in a vigorous style and stressing the importance of creative and

functional writing in a continuing program. It is a lively piece of writing, which includes an interesting credo.

CHARLES'S CREDO

1. Most students need to practice writing, and practice often, to learn to write.
2. Written composition should be an integral part of every school subject.
3. Trying to get elementary students, and most high school students, to learn grammar through memorizing rules is a good way to waste everyone's time--students' and teachers'.
4. Grammar, usage, and mechanics should be taught incidentally, as part of the writing process, as the student needs them.
5. Either the students aren't writing enough or their teacher is a masochist if she reads everything they write.
6. Students should not be required to share everything they write. They have a right to privacy and the right to fail without exposing their composition failures.
7. Students should be taught that their first drafts aren't inviolate, that revision and proofreading are as much a part of the writing process as drafting.
8. Composition is perhaps the most sophisticated thinking process we can teach or encourage.
9. Functional as well as "creative" writing should be taught at every level of schooling.
10. Whenever possible, student writing should be published, shared with a real audience, and have a purpose other than pleasing the teacher.
11. Through frequent practice and sharing of work, students can learn more about writing from themselves and other student writers than they can from the composition teacher.

Changes in style were often accompanied by changes in philosophy. A spirited diatribe against all of the problems involved in the teaching of writing issued from one high school teacher in her June presentation. It is an amusing, frustrated utterance. "Students have the notion that the ability to express oneself well would be a great asset in the business world as an administrator, a manager, or a secretary, but that this quality will be mystically conferred on them when they finally get a job. ...They would prefer to have writing analogous to a smallpox vaccine--once inoculated, you don't need to do it again." The August paper of this same teacher began, "Did the Southeast Center for the Teaching of Writing change my outlook? Yes!" and ended with, "SCTW has relaxed my attitude toward writing tremendously."

Keen philosophical comments emerged in another teacher's August paper. "Writing, honest writing, requires personal investment and involvement in the solitary confrontation of and experience with thought. As such, the writing process is both an examination of and expenditure of self." And the analogy, "The effective teacher of writing must dance on the tightrope of constructive criticism, never forgetting that the dance is a benefit performance for the developing writer, not an acclaimed performance for other literary critics."

Dramatic changes appeared both in the content and in the style of a post paper written by a high school teacher whose paper was not written until January. The avowed benefits from the SCTW workshop have changed not only her beliefs and practices about the teaching of writing, but have strongly influenced the teaching methods and style of other teachers in her school whom she has influenced as department chairperson. This teacher's June paper indicated a rather structured approach to the teaching of writing. "We have a tendency to get too locked into the formal expository paper, but we must teach that writing has not only varying purposes but also levels of formality. We must then teach the use of these purposes and levels...in a variety of topics and a variety of modes...and we should not grade all papers with equal severity." Many good points about pedagogy were made, but with a restrained stiffness. Her post paper, written during the ensuing teaching year, achieved a certain joyous flippancy that was refreshing. In short pungent sentences—sometimes just terse phrases—this teacher recounted her changes in attitude and methods, and the increased successes of her students. "I think I am more humanitarian. Less punitive. And I'm much more experimental." She continued, "The benefits derived by my students from group processing and revision are unquestioned. I've proved to myself that kids teach each other."

She presented, in brief but telling detail, the influence she has had on other teachers in her school. Two are using group processing, two use the autobiographical phase narrative as first papers, and "two of us are trying to move away from the 'naming of parts' approach to grammar—cutting the silken cord."

Cords are being cut, according to these essays, and in their place are ladders on which teachers and their students are climbing—sometimes slowly, sometimes with sure grasp—to more proficiency, to more joy in experiencing the process of writing.

PUBLISH OR PERISH: EDUCATORS FACE A WRITING COURSE

Anne Sherrill

For the adult, further education often involves unlearning old habits of thinking. Some find it is developing confidence in their ability to still learn. Others return to school with a carload of negative feelings associated with earlier school experiences. But what of full-blown professional educators returning for a summer writing course to help them cope with their need to publish?

It was not until I returned to school this past year that I realized how dull and lifeless, how formulaic, my own writing was. Yet I feared letting go of the old ways. The course called "Writing for Educators" offered me a chance both to loosen up my own writing and to explore first hand the whole writing experience with fellow adults. I set out to investigate what actually happened to thirteen educators. During the six-week course taught by Professor G. Robert Carlsen at the University of Iowa, participants tossed out some old notions about what good professional writing is, grappled with fears accumulated over the years about their own writing, and gradually began developing a sense of worth and confidence that they indeed had something to say.

...AN ISSUE FOR TEACHERS OF COMPOSITION:

IS THE INTENSE EXPLORATION...IN THE

JOURNAL AS WORTHY AS A PRODUCT?

Many arrived expecting the usual fare of a technical writing course or one geared toward learning to emulate the kind of writing found in their professional journals. Several had clear-cut goals. Jan was working on an article about textiles. Dan was doing research on psychomotor skills in Physical Education. Fran had been trying for over a year to complete a chapter on attitudes toward the nonambulatory patient. Pat had done some research on the methods various libraries use in selecting adolescent literature. Though others' goals were less clear at the outset, all shared a common interest and pressure to learn to write well. Initially there was some frustration when they began to realize they were not going to get a formula or be encouraged to model their writing after that typical of most educational journals. As Professor Carlsen said: "I think much educational writing is pretty dull. I did not want the course to perpetuate what *is*.

One of our first tasks was to translate examples of bombastic rhetoric, often boiling a long paragraph down to a simple sentence. Though at first many of us thought

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we'd be writing with one hand tied behind our back if we let go of all our pet jargon, we gradually allowed our list of taboo phrases and words to grow and said goodbye to some old friends: "pre-planning," "hands on," "curriculatory," "power struggle," "relevant," "thrust," "instructional design," "learning strategies," "domain," "model," "viable," "meaningful," and even "information processing." Midway through the course, after we had looked at some very colorful and effective professional writing, Peg, a local English teacher, expressed well what most of the group had learned--that good professional writing need not be jargon writing. "I've always had this notion of what educators writing to other educators should sound like. I've changed that."

It is natural for people to become more comfortable as they get to know one another. It became natural to enter the 7:45 a.m. class to the buzz of conversations and the ripples and guffaws of laughter that dotted the room. A musician talking with a grants writer. An artist laughing with a nurse. Part of the camaraderie developed out of feeling comfortable enough to share one another's actual fear and frustration with writing. I interviewed class members about their present writing and school experiences.

Only three stated that they ever write for pleasure any more, and for two that is confined to letters. There is some guilt attached to taking time to write. Julie keeps a journal she started as a sophomore in high school. She writes poetry and continues to play with language for the sheer joy of it. Kim used to write short stories in his younger years but no longer takes time. Most see writing as a chore. Only two had what may be called positive teacher-directed experiences in school, and that happened at the elementary level. Both Julie and Ellen had fourth-grade teachers who praised and encouraged their writing. For others the school experience was no such inspiration. Jan's first memory is receiving "minus" grades when she was learning to form letters because she liked giving what she thought was an artistic flair. From then on she thinks she equated writing only with "correctness." For Pat the memory all through junior and senior high is Red Marks. Vince says he never understood the teachers' comments but knew he would always get B's. Jeanetta tried to avoid writing whenever possible because no one ever told her she could do it. She was once told that she writes like a hyperactive child. For others it is a gray memory. Nothing horrendous, just a vacuum. Fran recalls an overall "down" feeling. Claire recalls non-person comments: "Awk," "Sp," or an occasional "You write a nice hand."

The school experience of these adults is no doubt typical of others across the country. The fact that they, for the most part, see writing as a burden and connected to "correctness" points to the product rather than process orientation by which writing is taught. The course provided fertile field for putting much recent theory about the teaching of writing to practice.

The course began with an Expressive base and constantly returned to it. For five to ten minutes two or three times a week the class did uninterrupted free writing. At first the writing was totally unstructured. Several members voiced frustration at writing on a dead run. Others sensed their writing being unable to keep pace with thinking. Two wanted to pause to collect thoughts and give coherence to the writing. All saw the potentiality of writing structuring thought and at times felt that the writing seemed to have a mind of its own. Donald Murray's statements by authors parallel the class's experience. Wright Morris: "The language leads, and we continue to follow where it leads." Kurt Vonnegut: "It's like watching a teletype machine in a newspaper office to see what comes out" (Murray in Cooper and Odell, p. 101). I observed a marked increase in the amount people were able to write as the weeks progressed.

Initially most could barely fill a page. Several weeks later most people wrote at least two, as they began feeling comfortable putting pen to paper.

From the often illegible and incoherent writing at the first of the course the group moved into five- to ten-minute structured writing. Professor Carlsen would suggest a topic or a phrase having to do with some aspect of our profession. From there we'd take off. Afterwards, if people so desired, they shared what they had written. It was also an opportunity to talk about what had happened in the writing process. I noted in these exchanges and in the taped interviews the growing awareness of the concept of "shaping at the point of utterance" (Britton in Cooper and Odell, 1974), in this instance the tendency of an initial sentence to shape the discourse.

Most members saw free writing as a breeding ground for ideas. Most read it over later to have an idea leap out to develop elsewhere. In this sense it often served as the Conception stage of the writing process. Sometimes that other place it developed was in a journal entry, another source for Expressive writing. Each of us wrote four entries a week. Subject matter and length, of course, were unstructured. Pat described the journal as a catharsis. For Ellen it was a garden of ideas. Many saw its function as did Julie--as way to get at an idea from several angles. It served then for many as a Conception and sometimes an Incubation stage.

One function of the journal entries was to enable us to climb down the ladder of abstractions to get in touch with our feelings. Whereas children must grow to progress from the concrete to the abstract, adults must often work toward getting in touch with the concrete. At the outset of the course most members viewed their writing as very general. John Dixon has said, "Moving down through the levels of abstraction...we are likely to become more involved in an experience and can explore it personally from within..." (Dixon, 1975, p. 117). We did just that.

With the writing of dialogues we moved toward consideration of audience. In one we were to structure a conversation between ourselves and a person outside our field about an issue in the field. In another we were to explore questions that an intended audience for a proposed publication might have for us. The stage was being set for movement into Transactional writing and toward the long-range purpose of the course.

Given the class's school background of "Don'ts" and insecurity about writing, it was important to create an atmosphere of trust. Most participants were experiencing a workshop for the first time. In these small groups we read aloud dialogues and various stages of the proposed publishable piece. The technique was extremely successful. Initially, most felt as Ellen did: "At first I was really nervous about having other people look at my writing. There it was--my blood and guts all over the page." From that initial uneasiness the group developed trust and respect for the judgment of others. Claire said she had always taken a shotgun approach to her writing, and classmates helped her narrow a topic. The variety of backgrounds made for challenge in communicating clearly. Mark told me that when only peers in the field read another's writing, it misses other potential audiences. As Pat said: "Trying to communicate to a person in physical education or home economics is a whole different matter from dealing with other librarians." At first people were afraid of hurting one another's feelings, but as trust developed, so did honesty. The judgment of the majority of the class was that they benefited from workshopping. Two, however, felt that they did not get enough useful criticism.

I have come to feel that one of my shortcomings as a teacher of writing has stemmed from my ignorance of the many stages in the writing process a given group of people are in as each works toward a product. As Donald Murray points out, pre-vision, vision, and revision are not always clearly defined stages and they often overlap (Murray in Cooper and Odell, 1974). Though the final goal of the course this summer was a product, the interim provided for each of us to work at whatever phase of production we happened to be in and to seek suggestions accordingly. In talking with students, I found that few were in the same stage of production at the same time.

Britton (1975) and Emig (1971) have shown that planning in the traditional sense does not necessarily promote the coherence that arises in the texture of writing. Three class members approached the first draft of their final product from using an outline. However, they indicated that though they have an end in view, the writing is shaped as it is written. At times it leads in a direction the writer did not anticipate. Fran phrased it well: "You play around with an idea. You make a connection. You put it to paper and then it dictates to you. The structure you start with takes you to how you're going to finish it. The writing says, 'Finish me.'"

Britton mentions "finding a way in" as one of the difficulties in writing a Transactional piece. The strategy must be such that the writer-reader interaction sets up a coherent movement toward the message (Britton in Cooper and Odell, 1974). At the end of the course Julie was still struggling with finding a way in: "It's like there's water in front of me and I can't swim. I can't get to that other point." For her the six weeks consisted primarily of exploring her idea at the Incubation level through journal entries. Production may not begin until some time later or never. The case poses an issue for teachers of composition: is the intense exploration she did in the journal as worthy as a product?

For many members, "making connections"—letting two seemingly unrelated things come together as a departure point or new angle into their piece of writing—came most often when they were relaxed or not thinking about writing. For Peg, it was generally during a walk home from class as she let her thoughts pour out. For Vince, it was when he went down by the river and let his mind "play." Jeanetta's "connections" usually came while she was washing dishes and often a sudsy hand reached for a pencil. For Fran it was usually while driving the Interstate, for Ellen while drying her hair. What runs through all is that "connections" cannot be planned.

As several worked through what Donald Murray calls the Vision stage of the writing process, the first draft or discovery draft, a number of old "Don'ts" reared their heads. Fran thought her style too loose. It was not formal enough to be a chapter in a book. Jeanetta worried about how much of a personal touch was too much. She had never written in the first person before and wanted to.

Class members became increasingly comfortable with Re-Vision. As in the Britton, Emig, and Murray sense, it took them far beyond the old definition of checking spelling and changing a word here and there. It was Re-Looking in the truest sense. Most of the group knew of revision only in the sense of punishment. In school days it meant a paper was terrible. This summer it became a natural stage in total production. As Ellen said: "It used to be painful for me to mark something up once it was on the page. But I'm learning that that's okay, that it doesn't do anything to damage it. To make it more concise or to put a paragraph in a different place. Or to throw it out and start all over."

As I interviewed members of the class, I came away feeling I was touching souls as they talked about their writing. It gave me a renewed awareness of how personal a matter it is. Writing represents a person's thinking and that person's structuring of reality. My participation in the course put me in touch again with my own writing process and reinforced my belief that to be effective teachers of composition, teachers themselves must write. I have seen first hand the putting of sound theory to practice and the value of using Expressive writing as a base upon which to build. To write effective Transactional pieces, a person must first be in touch with self.

The confidence I saw growing in these adults must to a large degree rest upon the nonjudgmental atmosphere. Writing did not receive letter grades but rather support peppered with criticism from both the teacher and fellow students. Several class members plan to continue the workshopping concept by meeting once a month. All members felt they were better writers as a result of the course. Not all inhibitions are gone, and they will no doubt crop up again, but all can say, however late, that they have had some good feelings about their writing.

Claire is more comfortable with vulnerability than she was before. Jan feels the fear of exposure is something she has put away, hopefully for good. Vince phrases the feelings of many in the class: "A voice teacher once told me sometimes you make some good sounds and you make them by accident. Sometimes you do some good writing and you do it by accident. But then there's somebody there who says, 'Hey, that's a good sound' or 'That's a good sentence.' And you do it again and it becomes gradually less an accident."

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CONFESSIONS OF AN ENGLISH(?) TEACHER

S. K. Curtis

I hate grammar. Always have. When subjects, verbs, and prepositions were introduced in grade school, I could not understand what was being labeled or why. The grammar terminology was expanded and enriched during high school to include clauses, verbals, gerunds, participles, and related garbage. None of this really affected me, as by that time I had become adept at psyching out the teachers and tests and could always fake my way through to an A in English.

But I wasn't really stupid. I loved to read and could evidently write fairly well, for I won a thousand dollars in scholarships based on two essay contests. There was simply no relationship, in my mind, between the labeling of words and phrases and the act of writing. Taking a perfectly sensible sentence and chopping its words out to be pegged on a diagram rack was boring and pointless, but I did want those A's. Somehow I made it through high school with respectable grades and no knowledge of grammar.

I DOGGEDLY KEPT ON, AN UNDERPAID SISYPHUS

PUSHING MY TATTERED GREEN WARRINER'S

UP A MOUNTAIN OF SUFFERING STUDENTS...

College was next. Remembering my bouts with grammar, I majored in history and social science. No one would ever ask me to diagram the *Punic Wars* or underline the prepositional phrases in the Gettysburg Address. I even felt safe enough to take literature courses when I found no grammar was involved. Since I read constantly anyway, I thought I might as well read for credits and speed up graduation. Unwittingly, I managed to acquire a minor in English.

That was my undoing. I found myself with a husband to put through school and the only available job in junior high school social studies *and* English. Mercifully, it was seventh grade, and I plowed through the grammar text the night before teaching each lesson, keeping one page ahead of my students. Subsequent teaching assignments led me through eighth, ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grade grammar with only a few breathing spells of geography, economics, and history.

Slowly, unwillingly, and painfully I learned grammar. I still didn't understand it, still hated it, and still taught it. I never thought of myself as an English teacher. English teachers can correct anything; they make no errors, and I still did. I tried

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to be a real English teacher. I corrected everything I could put a red pen to, desperately afraid the administration would catch on to my fraud. Maybe I would be sentenced to do penance with five classes of freshman grammar.

The grammar-writing-correction cycle continued in my classes. My students' writing didn't improve very much, but my proficiency in spotting errors increased to the point where I would subconsciously correct any printed material I encountered. I was beginning to feel like a real English teacher: my students were not learning anything but a loathing for grammar and writing. I doggedly kept on, an underpaid Sisyphus pushing my tattered green *Warriner's* up a mountain of suffering students. After I got tenure, I tried lessening the emphasis on grammar, but the general consensus in our departmental meetings was that our students couldn't write because we were not strict enough about pounding grammar into them. I was sure they were talking about me and that I alone was responsible for the general decline in writing proficiency. So I assaulted my students with a barrage of dittos on usage and punctuation. It didn't help, but I never mentioned that in our meetings. In fact, I never talked at all; I might expose myself because these people were real English teachers.

Obviously, I wanted out. But I couldn't coach football, so that meant no social studies assignments. Financial and family obligations tied me to the classroom; therefore a different career was out of the question. By the time the Southern Arizona Writing Project came along, I had managed, by judicious flattery and many six-packs of beer, to escape all but one class of the grammar-writing-correction genre. But I knew that situation could not last forever.

I almost didn't risk signing up for SAWP, but I was desperate. If I was scared of the real English teachers in our department, I was terrified of the real English professors from the University. For sure my cover would be blown if even one punctuation or grammatical error crept into my writing. But then again I had tenure, I needed help, the worst that could happen was public ridicule, and I had my *Warriner's* to comfort me.

And so I began. The spring workshop was interesting and fun, but the demands of a full family and work schedule were too distracting for it to make much difference in my teaching. Enough soaked in to awaken some hope, so I applied and went to the summer workshop.

The dust settled from the initial week's adjustments, and I began to think. I was a student in a composition class, and not one grade had been given, not one paper butchered with red marks, not one sentence diagramed, and I was enjoying it. This couldn't be right. English teachers make students suffer--that's how it's done. The second week passed with more revelations. I could write about as well as anyone else in the class. They made mistakes too. I saw them. I also saw my own mistakes and labored to correct them. I was writing for an accepting, but highly literate, audience, and I couldn't just grind something out and pass it in to be evaluated by a remote teacher. Those papers hung around and demanded revision. More thinking. We were all teachers: that is why it could work. No, that theory wouldn't do. Most of us felt and acted like students.

The checks came, so I bought the required books, and I began to read. It is one thing to feel something right and true, but it is pure ecstasy to find your own thoughts confirmed in a textbook written by authors having a powerful bit of alphabet after their names. I read far into the night and on through the weekend. McCrimmon, in "Writing

as a Way of Knowing," asserted that writing clarifies thought and should not be rigidly planned by the teacher. Furthermore, he stated, "...I think it not unreasonable to suggest that usage is a very small part of the total composition process and that that fact should be taken into account in the composition classroom." I squirmed and thought of the unbending outline form that my students were forced to use--departmental policy and my own cowardice. Visions of dittoed drill sheets, despised by both students and teacher, came to mind. I pressed on.

The article "The Teaching of Composition" was a brief review of how most composition classes are taught. The students write and the teachers correct. Not much is assigned because no teacher can keep up with the paper load. "Two thirds of the papers were corrected from a negative point of view involving only correcting faults and assigning grades." That made me feel better. Shared guilt is always lighter to bear.

Ken Macrorie jabbed at my conscience. "For decades we have been smearing the bloody marks (Sp, Awk, Gr) in the margins of what we call 'themes.' These papers are not meant to be read but corrected." He did go on to explain how a composition class could be conducted without massive grammar drills or finger-numbing correcting. Despite my guilt, I read it twice. Maybe I could use some of these ideas. I pursued the matter further and read his *Uptaught*. This book illustrated and explained his teaching methods. I laughed at his description of Engfish, for I had never been able to master that particular writing style despite a strong desire to do so. If I had to teach English, I wanted to be able to write like an English teacher. Another burden lifted. I was particularly intrigued by Macrorie's system of group analysis of papers. When we do it in the writing project, I look forward to it, and I try to improve. Maybe my students will feel the same way.

Murray's "Teach Writing as a Process not Product" added more ammunition to my growing belief that there could be more to teaching English than compulsively correcting papers. He states that most teachers approach writing as "...conscientious, doggedly responsible, repetitive autopsying [which] doesn't give birth to live writing." I groaned. Did he have any idea of the mountain of misshapen abortions I had felt obligated to read? "Mechanics come last" in his definition of the writing process, and only to aid communication. I thought back to how I had taught my babies to feed themselves. Plop the food down, spread the newspapers, and look the other way. They didn't stay sloppy forever, and their skills naturally increased. Best of all, I didn't evaluate every mouthful. Maybe all true learning is that way.

Britton feels this is so in his book, *Explorations in Children's Writing*. He regards writing as a natural growth from the expressive outwards toward both the expository and the poetic mode. Excessive correction and forcing the young writer will retard this growth. My students are not far removed from childhood, and I was forcing them to write papers of literary criticism. I was adequately punished, though. I had to read them.

"Teaching Rhetoric in the High School: Some Proposals," by Larson, declares: "I am urging teachers of composition to view writing not as a process of observing the rules of grammar." Did he mean that it was OK to stop hitting myself on the head with a hammer? I could use that kind of advice.

My own experience with the writing process was mirrored in "The Blockhead Writer: A Confessional," by Davis. He feels creativity is stifled and fear of writing

instilled by constant correction of grammar. Students cut down on amount and then stop altogether when the process of writing becomes too difficult. So, there are at least two of us and perhaps more. Could the bright and verbal, but reluctant, writers in my classes be potential "blockheads"? We'll see.

I kept searching the literature. Nowhere was it written that grammar should be mastered by students before they were allowed to write--except on the syllabus published by my English department. Nowhere was it said that every error should be corrected--except in my department meetings. Moffett mentions grammar in the context of helping students express their thoughts more clearly. It is taught piecemeal when, and only when, the need arises. Jo Inman came the closest to the view of the real English teacher by stating that grammar should be a part of continuous evaluation. But it should not be the main part. She never mentioned workbooks or diagraming.

Dave Holden came right out and said that grammar has no real relation to writing. I heard him. He said it without shame, and he teaches English. He even suggested sitting on your hands when the overwhelming urge to correct hits you. This sounds painful. Perhaps a soft pillow to sit on will help. Punctuation can be learned by reading, taking dictation, and listening to speech. I know this is true because that is how I learned it.

A private conversation with Frank O'Hare clarified my own role as a teacher.

"Do you correct every mistake your students make?" he asked.

I looked down at the patio cement. "Well, I used to try, but I'm not sure any more if it's such a good idea."

"How would *you* feel if I pointed out every single flaw on you?"

"I'd feel awful!"--as I self-consciously patted my hair to make sure everything was in place.

"Exactly! And yet that's what you've been doing to your students for years!" he said, finger jabbing at my nose.

"Stop it! You're making me feel guilty."

"Well, you should. And if you don't feel guilty you won't stop doing it."

I got even with him later in the evening.

I had the backing of experts. I could document my own long-suppressed feelings with quotes from professional texts. I would boldly march into our next departmental meeting and give them the word. No, I wouldn't. I had to face it. I am basically a chicken. Besides, what if a subject-verb disagreement showed up in my speech? Or a fragment? But I had to talk to someone. I decided on Sally, good friend and fellow teacher. She had dumped many details of her intimate problems into my ears. Now it was my turn to unload some heavy stuff on her. I called her because, as all good Catholics know, it is easier to confess to a disembodied voice.

We chatted for some time and efficiently dissected the latest behavior of mutual friends and then I finally forced it out:

Me: How do you feel about grammar?

Sally (pause): I don't know quite what you mean.

M: I mean do you think it helps kids write? Do your students improve with heavy doses of the stuff?

S: No, it doesn't seem to help their writing at all.

M: Then why do you teach it?

S: Same reason you do—I have to. Besides, all the other teachers think it helps.

M: Did you like it in high school?

S: Hated it. I wouldn't have majored in English at all, but we had this one teacher my senior year. She had a master's from Berkeley. She thought I was a good writer and even read my stuff to the whole class.

M: Did she correct every little error?"

S: No, she graded on content, and I got the idea I could write pretty well. Freshman comp was a breeze because I felt so confident. She quit teaching, though. Went to med school. Why are you asking me all this stuff anyway?

M: Oh, I've been doing some reading for this workshop I'm in. Just curious.

S: Learning a lot?

M: Yah, it's pretty interesting. Say, about the grammar. Do you ever forget rules and stuff, like over the summer?

S (reluctantly): Yes. I'm really ashamed of myself. Sometimes I make errors in class. This summer I'm going to buckle down and review it all before school starts.

M: Want to know something? Since I got out of teaching freshman grammar, I can't even diagram a sentence any more and couldn't tell you the definition of a verbal if my job depended on it.

S: Whew—that makes me feel better. Don't let Mrs. Gladlygrind hear you say that.

M: I won't. You know I don't say much in department meetings.

S: I've noticed that. You just sit there writing on your lunch sack. Poetry?

M: Nope. Grocery lists. Nobody can correct those.

S: Listen, I'm really glad to hear you have trouble memorizing grammar rules too. I've always felt like such a dummy.

M: Well, now there's two dummies in the department. Say, have you ever wondered—if teachers who teach this all the time and are supposed to be the experts forget the rules, what must those kids remember about it?"

S (thoughtfully): I'll bet not much stays with them. But we have to teach them some way to punctuate and write. If we don't teach them grammar and correct all their papers, how will they learn?

M: We have been doing that for years and they haven't been learning it for years, have they?

S: Guess you're right. What do the professors in your writing class have to say?

I thought she would never ask. I cited my sources, quoted quotes, related incidents, reported conversations and in general talked too long. It felt good to unload.

S: Whoa! That's more than I can handle. Sounds like you're really getting into that class.

M: I'd get into anything rather than correct all those papers and teach all that grammar and then have nothing to show for it.

S (interested): How are you going to escape the correcting?

M: I'm going to have my kids evaluate each other's writing.

S: Oh yeah, I have my kids exchange to proofread, too.

M: Not proofread—read and comment on in groups. Then they can clean up their own papers. I think it will be pretty slow at first, but they'll have to improve just to save face. Besides, it's fun. I'll only have maybe one good paper every two weeks to read.

S: And what about the rule about a graded paper per week?

M: So, I'll put three grades in instead of one. If I multiply them all by three, nothing will be changed. Don't you remember your algebra?

S (laughing): You might get away with it. I tried having the kids read their papers aloud to the class and it really cut down on the silly errors (giggle). Made grading a snap too.

M: Why didn't you tell me about that before?

S: Oh, I couldn't do very much of it because we had so much grammar to cover. Besides, it seemed so unprofessional. Say, do you think we can get together, and I could see some of the stuff from that class? I could use some new ideas.

M: Sure. Right now it's scattered all over the house, though. There hasn't been time to organize anything.

S: It really sounds promising, but I don't think you'll get away with the student correction part. You know every paper has to be graded—principal's orders.

M: Who's to know what goes on in my classroom?

S: Listen, I had a student take one of her papers I corrected to Mrs. Gladly-grind [the resident grammarian] for her to look over. She found a million things I'd missed. Then *she* took it to the principal.

M: Good God! Then what happened?

S: Nothing much. He just said to be more careful.

M: Um, well, if that happens to me I'll just tell him I'm doing a control study of the bimodal distribution of syntactic metaphors and, uh, that paper was one of the controls.

S: What kind of study is that?

M: Don't know. I just made it up. Bet the principal won't know either.

S (laughing): Guess you have it all figured out. What will you do if it doesn't work?

M: Keep trying everything I can get my hands on until I get some results. I can't do the kids any damage. They're not getting anywhere the way I have been doing it.

S: Sounds risky to me. How are you going to handle department meetings? What if they ask about what you're doing?

M: I'll tell them what I think they can accept and then just lie about the rest. I've been teaching a lie for years and no lightning has struck yet.

S: Good luck. I'd like to do the same thing.

M: Look, Mrs. Gladlygrind is retiring next year and new people are coming in all the time. Besides, I will make the face of my students' papers so fine that all the department will be in love with content and pay no worship to their garish red pens.

S (groan): You must really be worked up to break into Shakespeare.

M: No, just sick of making red marks on papers and getting nowhere. I remember a kid who wrote a really imaginative paper on shoes. Clever wording, neat, well organized, had everything. He was proud of it, too. I gave him a B because he had four grammar errors, and I only allowed two on an A paper. He looked crushed. Must have really worked on it.

S: Oh, I know how you feel. I've done that too.

M: You know what else I did?

S: What?

M: Corrected one of Billy's stories on Superman and made him write it over.

S: But he's only in the first grade.

M: I know—don't rub it in.

S: Was his next paper any better?

M: Don't know. He hasn't offered to write any more stories for me.

S: That's awful.

M: Do you suppose there's a special place in hell for English teachers?

S: Well, we'll have plenty of company if there is.

M (yawn): Say, what time is it?

S: Good grief! It's eleven o'clock and I have to teach summer session tomorrow. Let's get together on that new stuff, though.

M: We will. Goodbye.

I went to bed and thought of Lady Macbeth and her "damned spot." Maybe I could rub the red ink off my fingers and teach English instead of being a real English teacher. Next year I'll cover the chapters in *Warriner's*—with about six feet of wet earth.

THERE IS NO SOLUTION. SEEK IT LOVINGLY.

A POSITION PAPER ON COMPOSITION

Bruce C. Appleby

I am starting to understand what I feel the teaching of composition is and can be. I am convinced we write for three major reasons and that each of these reasons provides an approach to the teaching of writing. My experience as a Fellow in the Bay Area Writing Project (summer, 1979) has made much more clear to me that adherence to any one theory or approach is abhorrent to the process of writing and the process of teaching writing.

The first reason people write, which is the place we must start, is for self-discovery and personal growth. We come to understand ourselves better as people when we write about ourselves and from ourselves. This approach to education, best exemplified in the writing of John Holt and rooted in existential phenomenology, is what I see in Britton's function category of the poetic—where we come to terms with our role as spectator by ordering and communicating our experiences.

The second reason people write is as a means of developing cognitive skills. Writing makes communication possible outside the immediate context of the here and now. In this approach, best exemplified by Jerome Bruner, the writer must move into a more general frame of reference, a way of seeing that requires a different and higher level of classification and categorization. Here, the writer is moving from an audience of self to a more public audience. Indirectly, James Britton's function category of the expressive is a part of this motivation to write in that expressive writing becomes and is a means into the communication process. We set forth expectations generated from our cumulative past and shape and repeat our experience by sharing, through the stimulation of analytic competence demanded by this approach.

...TEACHERS RARELY WRITE AT ALL, YET EXPECT THEIR STUDENTS TO PRODUCE ON COMMAND.

The third reason people write is as a means of communication in a technological society, the informative, participatory role where language has a means—to inform, to persuade, or to instruct, as examples. This is Britton's function category of the transactional.

I do not see these three reasons for writing as being mutually exclusive. I now see where they are, more importantly, mutually integrated, with each existing only

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in tandem with the others. In my own teaching, in most texts, and in most curricula, I have seen far too strong an adherence to one of these approaches without attention being paid to the need for all three modes or functions at all levels. I have described my teaching of composition at the college freshman level as being "from Macrorie to McCrimmon." I now realize this eclectic approach is not only feasible, but absolutely necessary.

The "methods" by which one teaches writing generate from the shared experiences of teachers and from the sensitivity of the teacher to those in her charge. As there is no one reason for writing but, rather, a complex of overlapping reasons and motivations, so too there is no one method of teaching writing, but, rather, methods that grow from the teacher's awareness of herself and her students--their needs, their goals, and their concerns. The teacher must know of each lesson as well as of each semester or year what her goals and objectives are and why they are. The sharing of these awarenesses with her students and colleagues is what will contribute to a successful writing program.

To paraphrase what Steve Dunning said of the teaching of poetry, I feel strongly that the teacher of writing cannot pretend to teach writing unless she/he is a writer. For me, the greatest lesson to come out of the Bay Area Writing Project has been the realization that one cannot pretend to teach writing without writing oneself. My anxieties about having to write, my anger at having to write for a deadline, my joy at the positive reactions to my writing, and my growth through having my writing honestly criticized have made me realize that one of the great weaknesses of most writing programs is that teachers do not share their own writing with each other and that this lack of sharing leads to a lack of understanding and sympathy for the daily dilemmas we present to our students. Perhaps even more important is that teachers rarely write at all, yet expect their students to produce on command. I now see the teacher who refuses to write and to share that writing and its generative process as being as unprofessional as the teacher who refuses to be aware of the research and professional publications in the discipline.

Respect for and fear of the power of language is central to my approach to the teaching of writing. Giving my students a command of the written language so that they feel comfortable with it and in control of it is my goal. I cannot limit myself to any one approach or any one method. Seeking the means and methods to reach my goals is what makes teaching such an exciting profession. In my experiences as a teacher, I have seen many changes and many continua. This sense of excitement and change without change, coupled with my respect for my students as people, are what make me realize "There is no solution. Seek it lovingly."

I gratefully acknowledge Ms. Suzanne Howell's outstanding reply to my question on her doctoral examination at Southern Illinois University for helping to shape and form aspects of this paper.

KNOWLEDGE: A DIMENSION THE WRITING PROJECT MODEL NEGLECTS?

Sam Watson, Jr.

Teachers writing, teachers involving each other in classroom practices they have discovered to be successful, teachers providing each other with a continuing base of support for their efforts, teachers teaching other teachers—these are some major interlocking and mutually supporting dimensions of a Writing Project. Throughout, teachers are central. Selected ones, carefully screened, become designated as Fellows of a Writing Project and are brought together for an intensive summer seminar of writing, of responding to each other's writing, of demonstrations by each other on the teaching of writing. Those Fellows best suited for the special and demanding responsibilities of in-service education become Consultants of the Writing Project, conducting coherent programs for other teachers who have not been involved in a summer seminar. Throughout, a Writing Project nurtures teachers' best intuitions on writing; it promotes their confidence in their own experience as writers and teachers.

Yet one dimension of effective teaching may seem to have been overlooked in the Writing Project model. That dimension is "knowledge." Thus in this paper I ask, is there any knowledge that Fellows of a Writing Project ought to have?

WITHOUT SOME SORT OF INFORMING CONTEXT, TEACHING TECHNIQUES LAPSE INTO GIMMICKRY....

To a certain kind of professor, such a question would provoke an immediate "of course," followed by lists of concepts or titles. Larson,[1] Lauer,[2] Klaus,[3] Warnock,[4] and Kinneavy[5] are among those in the field of writing whose citatations can be very valuable indeed. This paper forgoes such lists; I promise (or warn) you that I shall propose no single book, theory, or body of research that should be known by everyone—or anyone—connected with a Writing Project or otherwise concerned with the teaching of writing.

My reticence comes only partly from timidity, a desire not to anger the tagmemicists and other problem solvers or the advocates of the imagination, the sentence-combiners or the deconstructionists, the classicists or the neoromantics among writing teachers and theorists. In not siding with any camp, my message may make everyone uncomfortable simultaneously; that would be something of an accomplishment, if discomfort leads to fruitful discussion.

Knowledge or even apparent knowledge is power, and power can be used as a weapon in the battles for academic position, a weapon turned against teachers and others who have not read the right books and who cannot or will not speak the language of furrow-foreheaded theoreticians, jargon junkies, and glib conventioneers who now

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profess their interest for writing. Knowledge used as that sort of power becomes something other than knowledge. This danger is the deeper source of my reticence.

Yet it is all too easy simply to ignore knowledge as being irrelevant to teachers of writing. In effect, that is what many teacher-training universities continue to do, and their dereliction surely is one source of current dissatisfactions with writing instruction. Whether in the press or in the profession, many participants in the debate about writing notably are *not* those who have thought most seriously about the issues. For example, a recent book on writing instruction, supported by the Council for Basic Education, boasts on its first page that the committee whose work it is "have in common the advantage that we are not 'experts' in the field of 'compositional theory,' but working teachers, writers, and editors."[6] Unaccountably but predictably, two pages later the authors claim, "Because writing expresses the integrity (or dishonesty) of an intellectual process, it is a moral activity." Presumably the injunction to intellectual integrity does not apply to writers of books on the state of writing. Many of us concerned with writing do seem to find satisfaction in our own ignorance. "It is very queer, but not the less true, that people generally are quite as vain or even more so, of their deficiencies than of their available gifts." Hawthorne could almost have had us in mind when he wrote those lines. Our indifference with regard to knowledge in our field is a passiveness which may not be entirely wise.

Knowledge can be a weapon, wielded by professors against teachers, by teachers against students. Yet teachers surely are responsible for knowing the field in which they teach. Thus my title is a question, not a thesis: *Is* knowledge a neglected dimension in the Writing Project model? Could increased emphasis be placed on knowledge, without damaging the model itself? The question arises for me in two contexts. As a site director, I want our summer seminar to be as fruitful as it possibly can be, for the persons directly involved and for the teachers whom subsequent in-service activities will reach. Our Fellows leave the seminar enthusiastic and experienced both in their own writing to some extent and certainly in a wide range of techniques presented on the teaching of writing. I would not sacrifice any of those qualities. Yet I do wonder if they leave the seminar informed about writing and questioning in any convincing way the pedagogical techniques that may present themselves. Said differently, I wonder if they are conscious of and confident in the knowledge they have actually experienced. If they lack *those* qualities, I wonder how long their enthusiasm will last and how effective their work with teachers will be. The second context is more general: From a number of different quarters, people are concerned to reconstitute a discipline of writing or, more accurately, of rhetoric. Disciplines usually get defined in terms of some body of identifiable theory, methodology, and research findings. Of all those efforts to develop a discipline concerned with writing, the Writing Project quite possibly is the most effective. From it, what can we learn about the evolution (and the definition) of a discipline? Within it, might any shifts in emphasis make it an even more effective agency for change, in instruction as well as in the other dimensions that characterize a discipline?

It is impossible to approach any of those questions responsibly, without bearing in mind the sources of the Writing Project's success. In the remainder of this paper, I would like to sketch those sources as I see them and to suggest how knowledge might be incorporated to strengthen the model further.

The first reason for the Writing Project's success is the lovable blur of nervous energy known as Jim Gray, not to mention the other superb staffers of the national

office. The Writing Project in the first place is always "successful" in the same way that Homer's sea is always "wine-dark"; Jim's epithet has stuck. In that strategy lies a lesson for us all.

More important, the times are ripe for writing. Even the "basics" movement, with its hard-nosed but mush-minded language of certitude, is more than a call for all subjects and verbs to agree. "Back to the basics" signals a hunger for a simpler time, perhaps, but more profoundly a hunger for meaning. I do not know in what senses there "is" a writing crisis, but I am convinced a reason people *perceive* one is that they realize, in some intuitive way, that in the peculiarly human action which is writing, persons achieve meanings, that writing invokes a human dimension, irreducible to rule.

I am not being cynical at all, in suggesting that one reason for the Writing Project's success is its simultaneous appeal to opposing values. We who are directly involved know how important the Project is in feeding our hunger for meaning. At the same time, from the outside the Writing Project often is seen as some definitive method, some proven program, which assures improved writing. Clearly that attitude pervades many of the sources in which the Project is approvingly cited.

The Writing Project has been called "a program without a program." That comment, intended as a criticism, I take to be a compliment; certainly it offers us an insight into the Project's success. Within a Project there is no set of classroom practices that have become doctrinal and must be followed; for that matter, no single theoretical framework is insisted upon. Within a Writing Project there are no experts. There *are* colleagues, persons with questions of mutual interest, who do not know everything and therefore have reason to listen, but who do know some things and therefore have ways to listen--actively. A Project creates a scene conducive to listening, hearing others' voices while we begin to recognize our own voices, including their intuitions and glimmers of insight which we can begin to trust and upon which we can begin to build.

In the presentations not passively noted but actively experienced, in the expressive, experiential writing, in the writing groups, a Writing Project is a scene for human *action* and interaction. Aristotle long ago saw that rhetoric is not primarily an art of knowing timeless principles or of making things. It is most profoundly an art of doing things, an art of human action. And it, along with dialectic, of all the arts is the only one that argues opposites. What Aristotle never quite glimpsed is that knowing is itself a human action, in which we often argue opposites. The mutual support, the challenges of various perspectives, the expressiveness, the active audiences, the nurturing of participants' intuitions, all central to a Writing Project, do not stand opposed to knowledge; nor are they unfortunate accretions to it. They are, we in the twentieth century are beginning to see, indispensable grounds of knowing. The hunger that a Writing Project feeds is in part epistemic.

To feed that epistemic hunger, all the dimensions of the Writing Project model are essential. Knowing becomes a possibility in those uncomfortable middle places, between competing perspectives, between one's own experience in writing and ideas on teaching writing, as one seeks to see each in terms of the other. All of the dimensions are necessary. But I doubt very much whether they are yet sufficient for lasting change either in a Fellow's own teaching or in the discipline of writing more generally.

Effective change requires a framework which, rooted in experience, becomes conceptual. Without that, even the best intuitions will quickly become useless; more

accurately, they will become ignored, by others and even by the persons who have held them. In print and in professional meetings, scholars of writing are taking more and more seriously the kinds of intuition and experience a Writing Project offers. Last spring's Ottawa conference, Learning to Write, surely the richest conference on writing yet held, left me with the distinct impression that scholars' current insights support our best intuitions as writers and teachers.[7] Without such confirmation, I wonder how much we will trust our own intuitions.

Without some such framework, I wonder how much we will either extend our intuitions or make our knowledge accessible to others. I wonder about the excellent group of teachers in our own Writing Project, for example. When challenged by parents, principals, or school boards, will they be able to appeal to any authority beyond the Project itself? I doubt it, and they need not be left so defenseless. Within their own classrooms, will they continue to question and to learn, from the student writing they read and the activities they encourage? I hope so, but I would like to be more confident. Without some sort of informing context, teaching techniques lapse into gimmickry and teachers are unable to explore options, to initiate and to appraise changes. The end of a Writing Project seminar ought to be a point of departure rather than an arrival.

To encourage that orientation, I think we should insist that Fellows, when they are presenting their own best teaching practices, should have seriously sampled some of the research and professional articles that bear on those particular practices. The point should not at all be for the one to subsume the other but for each to inform and challenge the other. Probably we have all experienced the student whose writing and thinking are reasonably coherent and purposeful as long as they proceed only from that person's experience but whose work, as soon as he is asked to add a footnote, explodes into chaos because he has no way to attend to his own meanings while standing in fearsome awe of the printed word. That is bound to be a challenge for teachers as well, one that can and should be met within the supportive environment of a Writing Project.

The success of the Writing Project model demonstrates that a discipline, certainly our discipline, is not theory and research findings alone. More profoundly, a discipline is a matter of continuing, challenging dialogue, among a community of persons who have accepted the commitments of that discipline. Without this dialogue, research finding or theory would rarely come into being; without continuing dialogue, they would quickly lose their reason for being. The Writing Project model already offers a scene for conversations, on writing and in writing, within ourselves and among ourselves. To disrupt those dialogues would be to undermine the model's success. However, it seems to be that within a project the dialogues could fruitfully be broadened. While continuing to hear our own voices as writers and to learn from our varied experiences as writing teachers, we should also begin to hear those other voices that appear in print. I am proposing no more than that. In those printed voices we can expect to find challenge, extension, and support of our own perceptions. We should find ourselves members of a growing community much broader, more supportive, and more diverse than any single Project site can provide.

A year hence, I hope I can report success on that score from our site. I hope our Fellows will be reading more, and reading more purposefully. I also hope to begin suggesting from the beginning some loose theoretical framework for concerns in writing, one that can evolve through the summer and beyond, helping Fellows place the ideas they have and hear, seeing them in relation to each other.

In the meantime my goal is to continue asking what might be meant by "knowledge" and in what roles it might strengthen the impressive potentials that the Writing Project clearly enjoys. This paper will have served its purpose if, through raising those questions, it contributes to a continuing dialogue among members of the Writing Project community.

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[1]Richard L. Larson, "Resources for the Veteran Teacher, New to Composition," ADE Bulletin, 58 (September 1978), 28-32. See also Larson's annotated "Selected Bibliography of Research and Writing About the Teaching of Composition" in each May issue of College Composition and Communication, beginning with the May 1975 issue.

[2]Janice Lauer, "Heuristics and Composition," College Composition and Communication, 21 (December 1970), 396-494.

[3]Carl Klaus, "Public Opinion and Professional Belief," College Composition and Communication, 27 (December 1976), 335-340.

[4]John Warnock, "Who's Afraid of Theory?", College Composition and Communication, 27 (February 1976), 16-20; "New Rhetoric and the Grammar of Pegagogy," Freshman English News, 5 (Fall 1976), 1-21.

[5]James L. Kinneavy, A Theory of Discourse (Englewood Cliffs, N. .: Prentice-Hall, 1971). To be reissued by W. W. Norton, forthcoming.

[6]Clifton Fadiman and James Howard, Empty Pages: A Search for Writing Competence in School and Society (Belmont, Cal.: Fearon Pitman, in association with the Council for Basic Education, 1979), 1.

[7]Selected papers from this conference will be published as Re-Inventing the Rhetorical Tradition (Conway, Arkansas: L & S Press, forthcoming).

TEACHERS, KNOWLEDGE, AND POWER: SETTING AN INFORMED AND INFORMING CONTEXT FOR A WRITING PROJECT

Charles W. Bridges and Richard VanDeWeghe

During the recent annual meeting of Project Directors of the National Writing Project's sites, Dr. Sam Watson, Director of the University of North Carolina at Charlotte Writing Project, raised the question of what teachers of writing, especially those involved in writing projects, should know. Dr. Watson explored two main points in his talk: (1) that knowledge is power that may become a weapon and be turned against teachers who "haven't read the right books," and (2) that "without some sort of informing context, teaching techniques lapse into gimmickry, and teachers are unable to explore options, to initiate and explore change" [see preceding article]. Dr. Watson's remarks are pertinent to any writing program or, for that matter, to any course in the teaching of writing. Far too often, such course work focuses exclusively on methods, and for what appears to be good reason. Teachers, whether present or future, are faced with the prospect of increasing pressure from the public—parents, local administrators, school boards, state administrators, politicians, even students themselves—to teach writing well, hence the loud "Back to Basics" hue and cry. And because those teachers want as much help as they can get as quickly as they can get it, the tendency to present the gimmick that works in a particular situation is strong. But rather than providing only the bag of tricks, we should be providing information from which teachers can knowledgeably fill and then replenish their own bags. Rather than simply presenting successful strategies for teaching writing, we should be focusing teachers on the necessity of practice supported by theory and research.

"IT CONTINUALLY SURPRISES ME HOW MUCH OF WHAT I'M READING...EXPLAINS THINGS I HAD SUBCONSCIOUSLY REALIZED..."

But for those of us concerned with working with teachers of writing, a problem arises here, and it is a problem with which we must deal continually: given the explosion of knowledge about writing and the writing process, what of it should teachers of writing know, and how can we best present this knowledge to them? Those of us working with writing projects face a special form of this problem, since our business is not to proselytize, not to win teachers to any particular point of view, save that they recognize the importance of weighing their individual approaches to the teaching of writing against other approaches and modifying their approaches as *they* think necessary. Yet there is considerable material that teachers should be acquainted with, though they need not adopt it or even adapt it for use in their classrooms. The problem, then,

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becomes one of how to present that material to writing project participants without imposing it on them. Our project—the New Mexico State Writing Project—has, we believe, dealt successfully with this problem, and this essay forms a report of our solution.

On the surface, our solution is a simple one: we presented opposing and/or complementary views on particular topics through formal presentations, informal discussion, and readings. But we left it for the teachers themselves to mediate among the various positions presented to discover their individual stances, an action in keeping with the stated purpose of our project:

> The New Mexico State Writing Project is designed to acquaint you with a broad range of topics and issues concerning writing, the learning of writing, and the teaching of writing, so as to help you to evaluate your individual approach to the teaching of writing. We hope that both during and after the workshop you will examine your beliefs and practices, and that as a result of this examination, you will find support for much of your work as a teacher of writing, challenges to that work, and insight into your strengths and weaknesses as an educator.
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> In 1974, a report presented to the Carnegie Conference on the State of Undergraduate English noted that the English profession needed to
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> 1. assess the value of current methods of teaching writing, and
> 2. explore the relationship between the teaching of writing and of the traditional rhetorical concepts and new theories of discourse, the relationship between new grammars and the teaching of grammatical correctness . . . the relationship between the principles of group dynamics and the social reorganization of the classroom, etc.
>
> These two needs we will address in our workshop through readings, writings, and discussion, focusing on practice undergirded by theory. The purpose, then, of the NMSWP is to help each participant develop a framework for the teaching of composition, a framework based on a sound historical perspective and the most recent available knowledge and research in composition.

To fulfill this purpose, we proposed to explore these topics.

1. Research in Writing (The State of the Art)
2. Process Orientation
3. Classroom Environment
4. Invention
5. Writing Groups
6. Response vs. Evaluation
7. Risk Taking
8. Collaborative Learning
9. Conferencing
10. Teacher as Model Writer
11. Political Activism

The participants in our Project, like those in other projects, each made a long presentation of a successful classroom strategy. In addition, we required a daily journal, five essays, and numerous readings—Peter Elbow's *Writing Without Teachers,* Eldonna Everetts' (ed.) *Explorations in Children's Writing,* and 35 articles from NCTE journals. The writings and the readings always integrated theory, research, and practice—because we wanted our teachers to examine the *why* behind the *what*. Thus, while they read and wrote a lot about teaching strategies, they did so in an intellectual matrix rich in learning theory, language theory, writing theory, and empirical research in writing. These writing and reading requirements, we felt, would combine with much discussion and debate in class and would thereby continually engage participants in cycles of writing, reading, and talking about writing—both in its intellectual foundations and in its practical applications. The journals, essays, and readings combined with the general experience of the Project to provide for our participants, as Dr. Watson stressed, the knowledge that is power.

In their journals, participants responded in many ways to the readings by reacting to the questions we posed: "With what do you agree or disagree in this article?" or "How does this point of view compare with yours?" or "Would this approach work with your students? Why or why not?" Teachers could also reflect on issues brought up in our daily sessions; since often there just was not enough class time for complete discussion of some topics, the journal served as a monologic extension of class exchanges.

Along with reflecting on discussions past, teachers used journal writing to prepare for upcoming class discussions. For example, the first journal topic assigned for class preparation was "What *is* basic in writing?" Teachers came to that discussion with privately articulated views ready for public exchange and/or modification. Other journal assignments included the following:

1. Is dialect influence on writing a problem in your work with your students? If so, how? And how do you address these problems?
2. Identify what you see to be the principles of the curriculum James Moffett describes in his article. In what ways do you see these principles at work in your own curriculum?
3. Identify what you see to be the principles of James Britton's approach to writing. What shape would a writing program based on these principles take?
4. What theoretical, research, or practical threads do you see coming together so far in the Project?

Along with journal assignments, we required of each participant five essays. Though assigned, the topics were designed with enough generality to allow much individual interpretation and application. We intended that each topic would force teachers to examine carefully one aspect of the teaching of writing, preferably one that they had never considered before or at least one about which they had only inchoate ideas. Thus, writing these essays either brought about initial scrutiny of something previously unexamined, or served as impetus for articulating the barely articulated. These essay assignments were as follows:

1. *What is Good Writing?* This first assignment asks that you write a position paper in response to this question? What is good writing and how may teachers elicit such writing from their students? (Your response should be more theoretically than practically oriented, in that this assignment asks you to define

good writing as it applies to the level of students with whom you work and then to discuss, in general terms, pedagogy which can elicit such writing.) [Note: This essay was a pre-workshop assignment due the first day of the Project.]

2. *The Process of Writing.* One of the themes of our workshop is the process of writing, and this paper requires you to focus on your personal process. Describe that process. What activities do you typically engage in as you prepare to write and then as you write? (For example, if you find stumbling blocks, how do you overcome them?) How do you produce a paper? What advice do you give your students about producing papers? Compare and/or contrast your own practice with that you describe or prescribe for your students. If the two are different, how do you account for the difference(s)?

3. *Assignment Making.* You have been asked to take part in an in-service training session for teachers in a neighboring school district and have been given the task of talking about the making of writing assignments. What will you say to your audience? What rationale will you present for the making of writing assignments? What sample assignments will you present to support and amplify your remarks? (Please incorporate these sample assignments into your paper or append them to it.) What strengths and/or weaknesses do you perceive in the approach you will outline for your audience?

4. *Why Write?* Wayne Booth has said that we live in the most rhetorical age ever. And with the constant bombardment of words via such electronic marvels as television, telephone, teletype, and radio, it's easy to agree with Booth. At times telecommunications seem so pervasive as to threaten the need for people (particularly students) to learn to write. The question "Why write?" is one that we as teachers of writing must address. Respond to that question, and assume that your audience is a group of interested parents and school board members in your district.

5. *What is Good Writing?* The first writing assignment you fulfilled before the workshop actually began. Its topic--what is good writing and how do you elicit it from students? That same topic is the topic for this, the final paper. Please do not reread your first paper on this topic; instead, write a new paper from scratch.

Each essay assignment meshed the practical with the theoretical. For example, in order for a teacher to describe her actual writing process, or processes, and compare or contrast her process with her students', she had to examine not just one model of the writing process (her own), but others' as well (her students'). Finding connections between those processes formed the beginnings of a personal theory of writing processes which was then seen beside the personal theories of the other teachers and the theories put forth in some of the readings (e.g., Elbow, Moffett, and Britton).

With each essay assignment, teachers duplicated this same self-examination procedure *before* reading on the topic. It was important that they grapple--intellectually and pedagogically--with each topic so that they could look carefully and critically at themselves as writers and as teachers of writers--with originality, honesty, and curiosity. Thus, though Peter Elbow's description of writing as a process of growing

and cooking was an integral reading selection, participants did not read about it until they had first come to grips with their own writing process themselves. Likewise, the teachers had to form their own personal "Why write?" statement before they received our handout readings on the subject and before we discussed the topic in class.

The required readings dealt with teaching practices in some way, but always with the practices described from a rich theoretical or research base. Roughly speaking, the readings fell into three groups: (1) writing theory and practice, (2) writing research and practice, and (3) combinations of theory, research, and practice. In *Explorations in Children's Writing,* for example, Evertts provides an excellent set of essays by James Britton that illuminate much of the theory undergirding his work. Similarly Robert Blake's "How to Talk to a Writer, or Forward to Fundamentals in Teaching Writing" (*English Journal,* Nov. 1976) examines the "basics" in writing, but through a theoretical framework that enriches the practices he discusses. But we also wanted teachers to become familiar with empirical research in writing, particularly with some of the work that appears in *Research in the Teaching of English (RTE).* Thus, Richard Beach's study of evaluation (*RTE,* May 1979) provides useful insight into this critical teaching activity; similarly, Elaine Maimon's and Barbara Nodine's study of the relationship between sentence combining practice and syntactic error (*RTE,* Oct. 1978) illustrates part of the research base for evaluating the effects of sentence combining activities. Finally, we presented many articles that integrated writing theory and research with pedagogy. Charles Weingartner's "Getting Back to Some Basics that the Back-to-Basics Movement Doesn't Get To" (*English Journal,* Oct. 1977) pits teaching beliefs and practices against what we know from theory and research about learners and learning. Likewise, Barry Kroll's "Developing a Sense of Audience" (*Language Arts,* Oct. 1978) establishes the importance of the child-writer's audience in a sound, theoretically and empirically supported context.

We would like to illustrate how theory, research, and practice were integrated in our journal, essay, and reading requirements by presenting briefly our Project approach to the topic "Invention." This came during the second week of the Project, after our participants had completed writing the first essay, "What is Good Writing?" In this essay, a number of teachers remarked that *what* students say (along with *how* they say it) partially defined "good writing." From this concern, we made the following journal assignment:

> In your papers defining good writing, a number of you noted that content was important. What do you do to help your students generate this content?

Along with this journal assignment, we passed out three articles dealing with invention: David V. Harrington's "Teaching Students the Art of Discovery" (*College Composition and Communication,* Feb. 1968), James M. McCrimmon's "Will the New Rhetorics Produce New Emphases in the Composition Class?" (*College Composition and Communication,* May 1969), and Charles W. Bridges' "An Interest Inventory for Topic Discovery" (*Freshman English News,* Winter 1979). The teachers came to class, then, having logged considerable time reading and writing about invention. Following a class presentation on formal and informal invention strategies, we began our discussion of the teachers' journal entries and responded to their questions about and reactions to the readings.

This one-day focus on invention began with comments teachers had made in a formal essay and led to intense reading, writing, thinking, and talking about invention in its theoretical, research, and pedagogical aspects. Invention strategies--from

brainstorming to tagmemics to interest inventories—thus became more than mere gimmicks for generating content. In the minds of our teachers, they became sound pedagogical approaches in a now-familiar intellectual context.

As we stated in our introduction, our purpose was not to convert teachers to any particular point of view but to convince them of the importance of practice being undergirded by theory and research, and we believe we succeeded. Nearly all of our participants indicated in their journals and through other actions that their interest in research and theory had been kindled and would remain. For example, either during the workshop or immediately after, our participants bought at least 91 publications on the teaching and learning of writing, many of which were NCTE publications. This interest spilled over into professional organizations, with all of our participants joining the New Mexico Council of Teachers of English (NMCTE) and with 75 percent of them attending the 1979 NMCTE annual convention. Further, at least five of these participants will submit program proposals for both the 1980 NMCTE and the 1980 NCTE conventions. But more indicative than such quantitative findings are qualitative statements from the participants themselves, and we can think of no better means of assessing how well the NMSWP helped its teachers to develop the informing context necessary for their teaching and for their dealings with the public than by letting the participants speak in their own words. Hence, the following excerpts from conversations and from journals:

> *I talked with [my department head] and he was really surprised to learn that we aren't dealing in simple gimmicks in this project, but rather that we are dealing with deep philosophical views of the child and so forth, not games and superficial stuff.*
>
> *You know, we can use this project to provide <u>our</u> input (as teachers) into such things as APL and those attacks on us by the university people who say we aren't doing our job. We should be grateful that <u>we</u> know about the grammar and writing studies to refer to when the university comp teachers tell us we're sending them kids who don't even know what a verb is.* [Note: APL is the Adult Proficiency Level examination required of high school students in New Mexico's public schools.]
>
> *We need to involve ourselves in state activities to formulate change.*
>
> *<u>We</u> have to help <u>them</u> [administrators and State Department of Ecuation personnel].*
>
> *We need to get on the state textbook committee.*
>
> *I think we need to do research. I need to keep close to the sources. I need to do research.*
>
> *I found myself reacting with apprehension in the first weeks of class because it looked as if I were being asked to revise all my teaching methods and give up textbooks and teaching grammar. Once I put that fear behind me I could see that I've been using many of the new concepts already, but because my only reason for using them was that they worked, I wasn't using them effectively. From dread I've*

gone to eager anticipation of the fall teaching. I have begun revising my lesson plans to include some of the activities that have been presented in the workshop, but even more than that, I'm revising the old methods to include some of the new concepts.

I think the papers you've assigned for us to read have really helped more than anything. They've forced me to delineate things for myself, to decide what it is that I believe.

One of the many things I have gained through assigned readings is that I have become acquainted and familiar with people and names and I take pride in looking for their names and references to their philosophies in journals, articles, books, etc. I guess I might say I have gained enough respect for many of them that I want to read anything they've written.

It continually surprises me how much of what I'm reading for this class explains things I had subconsciously realized but not written down or spoken out loud.

I am happily overwhelmed and inundated. I feel that I have benefited immensely and really do feel inspired to start teaching in the fall. This immersion into teaching practices, problems, and theory provides a rich bed of experience.

We too feel that we have benefited from the 1979 Project, and we look forward to the 1980 Project. Some of the materials we use will change as the interests of the 1980 participants dictate, but the model itself will not. We are satisfied that our Project offers our participants the opportunity to build for themselves an informing context and with it to gain the knowledge that is power.

TEACHERS WRITING

Michael Heller

> But writing and teaching, in my life, definitely go together very closely . . . . We are trying to tell the kids that this is important. Unless they see us doing it, they are not going to believe us.
>
> *Richard Calisch, interviewed in* Today's Education, *Nov/Dec 78*

> The place to improve the world is first in one's own heart and head and hands, and then work outward from there.
>
> *Robert Pirsig,* Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance

When I was a high school student, I had an excellent art teacher who used to get under the skin of members of the English faculty with a simple question. He would ask them, "What have you written lately?"

As a beginning English teacher, years later, I was vaguely haunted by that question. If I were going to stress to my students the power and benefits of writing, wouldn't I be more knowledgeable and convincing if I were actively writing? If I believe that writing is essentially "good" for us, as a way to solve problems, as a way to understand ourselves and our world, shouldn't I be doing more of it myself? My college preparation had done little to keep me writing as a natural, life-long endeavor, but I knew I wanted to write.

WE FELT AS IF WE REALLY WERE POETS, AND IT WAS A GOOD FEELING.

Seven other teachers and I decided to help ourselves get started. We organized our own Creative Writing Workshop for Teachers, and we wrote poetry—we could have just as well been writing journals or nonfiction. What we did in the workshop was not unique or different from other writing workshops. The important thing was that we did it ourselves. Because of that experience, I now see a need for changing the way we teach writing and a need for changing our college training of English teachers. What follows is a description of what we did, along with some discussion of those needs.

We were lucky enough to have the help of Arthur Smith, a poet in the Writers in the School Program sponsored by the Arizona Commission on the Arts and Humanities. For two semesters, Art Smith was writer in residence at the high school where I teach. When Art and I first discussed the need for the workshop, we assumed that

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many teachers would, at least secretly, like to try their hand at writing but had not had the opportunity. Because teachers are already overburdened with large classes and many papers to grade, we knew that they needed a way to write that was not an additional burden. We assumed that it was easier to get started with the positive support of other people, especially other teachers and, if possible, professional writers. We knew that we learned by doing, and we assumed that teachers of writing need to be writing. They need to be *doing* their discipline if they are going to teach with vitality and expertise. They would then be better able to involve their students in doing what we all want them to learn.

There were no such assumptions for me—I wanted the workshop for myself. I wanted to acquire writing of my own to show as examples ot my students. I wanted to learn of writing projects that I could use in my classes. I wanted to learn about contemporary people publishing exciting things—the "up-and-coming" names in poetry now. I wanted to find out about local writers I could invite into my classes.

The workshop would be good for Art, too. He saw the workshop as an opportunity to reach through teachers many more students than he normally would by briefly visiting classes. And because of their education and experience, the teachers would respond to his work in ways that would be challenging for him.

We organized the workshop to meet on our high school campus for two hours one day per week. We began the last half hour of the school day, which was important because the meetings had to be rewarding, and we felt that what we were doing belonged in the school. We set out to explore the idea that we should be artists first and teachers second. It required that we look differently at ourselves and at what we do in our classrooms. This is not to say that we set out to be "great artists"; rather, we wanted to explore what we could do, at least in one direction, with words. To me, an artist-teacher is not a person who necessarily publishes or pursues a second career but a person who does what he or she teaches. An artist is deeply involved in some aspect of his discipline, whatever the discipline. Thus the teacher who keeps a private journal can be an artist.

We gave ourselves writing assignments that were intended for us as adults. If a person wanted to alter the assignments for high school students, that was his or her choice, but the workshop was for us. We wrote in class and out of class. We began with anagrams, spontaneous timed writings, and writings to different types of music. We wrote poems made from lists, poems built around words picked randomly from the dictionary, and poems begun with first lines from famous poems. We later compared our poems to those of the famous poets. We wrote persona poems that made use of a voice other than the poet's—sometimes of inanimate objects, sometimes of personalities different from the poet's. We recorded our dreams and then wrote dream poems through the voice of a persona. We wrote poems made of lies. We had workshop members each bring in an assignment for us. Much of what we did served to free us of barriers—to get us writing.

We read and critiqued each other's poetry. Often people would rewrite their work after the critique and bring it back the following week. The critiques were gentle, but honest, and always the most exciting part of our meetings. Usually the critique flowed spontaneously from questions about what was going on in the poetry. "What did you mean here? I don't quite understand...." "Were you trying to say...?" "This is a great image." "This line seems vague to me." When my work was being discussed, I felt emotions ranging from foolishness to great pride.

I discovered a number of interesting things about writing and about teachers writing, things that in turn carried over into my teaching:

1. I began to read more poetry, and I began to read it with a more relaxed interest than before. I found myself saying of a good poem, "Look what this guy has done here!" What before was an awesome work of art became a little less awesome, and I was now "seeing" the poem in a more vital way.

2. I had been keeping a journal before, but now it began to change--it was becoming a "sketchbook" of raw material. I found myself writing down bits of conversation or interesting phrases that seemed like good material for later poems. I paid more attention to words and their sounds and meanings.

3. When we sat in the teachers' lounge, we referred to "our poems" half jokkingly as if we were poets. We felt as if we really were poets, and it was a good feeling.

4. Near the fourth week of the workshop, our writing generated ideas for more writing. We found formal writing assignments unnecessary.

5. Time was the number one problem; we knew it from the beginning. Several people who dropped out of the workshop said there just was not time for writing. The rest of us found ourselves more sympathetic with our students who cannot get assignments in on time. (We also shared some students' frustrations with assignments that are too difficult.) I found myself making time during school to write. I would steal time between classes to write. When my students worked on writing assignments in class, occasionally I used the time to work on my writing. I knew that "modeling" can be an effective way of teaching. I wanted them to know I was writing, too.

6. Writing assignments for my classes grew out of my own writing. I wanted my students to write "real stuff." Incorporating more poetry and journal writing into my regular classes, I organized critique sessions, and I enjoyed sitting with the students and critiquing their writing as well as mine. Although I still did not enjoy grading, I found myself looking forward to reading the students' work.

7. I found myself questioning what I was doing in my writing. Playing the poet, I wanted to find ways to write better poetry. Large questions surface that must seem naive but that were important to me. What should poetry be? When I write, I sense that the way I see the world is different--is there such a thing as "artist's vision"? Can I control this vision? What is the role of observation in this way of seeing? When should I use "my voice"? How do I know "my voice"? Is creating an image sufficient or must the writing develop an idea"? I saw myself quickly finding a "method" and then just as quickly wanting to break away from that method.

In these ways, our writing workshop made more clear to me some of the changes I see needed in the way we teach English and the way we prepare English teachers. The workshop was a place where people were primarily *doing*--what they were doing was languaging and creating out of their own experience. Most of the English classes in which I have participated, both as student and as teacher, have been places where

we studied what some "creative person" (which we supposedly were not) had written. The kind of learning that took place in the writing workshop should be happening in our classrooms, but to make that happen we as English teachers will have to approach what we do from a different perspective.

We need a new model for the English classroom. It has occurred to me that teachers of high school English could learn much from our schools' art departments. Our writing workshop supported that insight. In high school studio art classes, the students are exposed to art history, art appreciation, and aesthetic criticism, but in relatively small doses. The primary activity they are concerned with is *doing* art--with painting, with drawing, with sculpting, with jewelry making, with creating. High school art students often enjoy what they are doing. They create *real* objects of worth to themselves and very often to others. Sometimes their work is sold. Many of their works are displayed with pride in their homes or in the school.

Couldn't this same sense of excitement and involvement happen more frequently in the English class? My experience in the writing workshop suggested it could. How often do students in English classes take pride in their writing to the point that they show it to their parents and friends? How often do parents of high school students show their adult friends what their child has written? When I was in high school I took several art classes and especially enjoyed painting. My parents still have several of my paintings hanging in their home, and I believe these give them much pleasure, but to my knowledge they have kept none of my written work.

Of course such creativity and pride should be in the English class. But for that to happen we may have to better understand the studio art process and what working artists and writers actually do. We may have to become sincerely concerned with our students' written products. Ken Macrorie in *A Vulnerable Teacher* advocates the importance of letting students bring their personal experiences to their writing. Macrorie writes, "I now ask of every teacher only one thing: are your students doing good works? There is no other test of a teacher" (page 84). That is an intimidating remark, but Macrorie's message is at heart a gentle message. The paradox is that our students' "good works" do not suddenly and magically blossom after years of exposure to a puritanical work ethic using external punishments and rewards. Rather, "good work" grows naturally out of an involvement in the art process, which is intrinsically exciting and rewarding. As Ed Shipp, a teacher of art teachers at Arizona State University, has said, "Students get bored being lectured to about biology, but the biologist who is in the lab (or in the field) is rarely bored doing biology." Our English students need to be *doing* what writers do--actively creating through language. This may at times require hard work and discipline, but it will not be boring.

The studio art class as a model does not, however, translate directly to the writing class. The differences between the two present many questions. What after all is the studio art process? How are the visual artist's thought processes and activities different from those of the writer? How are the artist's and the writer's uses of imagery related? The answers to these questions involve understanding the very nature of art and the nature of learning. It would seem that art educators have made a very broad and deep study of the creative aspects of their discipline. As teachers of writing, we might do well to look at books such as Herbert Read's *Education Through Art* and Edmund Feldman's *Becoming Human Through Art: Aesthetic Experience in the Schools*.

At this point, a legitimate question is: how can we involve high school students in writing, given the realities of large classes and heavy teaching loads? To answer that question we must address the following "needs," which have become apparent to me as a result of the writing workshop and the studio art class model.

We need to look for and assign extended "problems" that reproduce as nearly as possible the "real" artistic process. (I learned in the workshop that good writing assignments are more difficult to create than I first imagined. Most of the teachers in the workshop had never taken a course in creative writing; thus, we knew little about teaching this way.) Feldman, in *Becoming Human Through Art,* discusses in depth the problems of the artist and the problems of the child and the relationship of both to their art work. The real problems for all of us are in understanding our world and ourselves. There are important reasons for giving assignments that provide students the opportunity to bring their experiences to their work. If in school we help children to see writing as the expression of their own problems (as it is for the artist)—their problems being their own interaction with the social and physical environments—then writing will have direct bearing on their lives.

Feldman sees several functions of art; among them are art as problem solving, art as expression of self, and art as perfectionist impulse (pages 30–47). We as English teachers have neglected the first two, and we disdain our students for neglecting the third. Too often classroom assignments are artificial, trite, or obviously mere exercises—thus merely adding to the child's difficulties in understanding his world (Feldman, page 34).

The best printed source of such "problems" that I have found for the writing class are in James Moffett's *A Student-Centered Language Arts Curriculum: Grades K-12.* This teacher's handbook contains a series of assignments dealing with form and purpose. In his section on grades ten through thirteen, Moffett explains writing assignments that range from Memory Writing to Portion of Autobiography to Poems of Observation to The Interview to The Case to Research with Documents; from the Stream of Consciousness to Spontaneous Reflections; from the Socratic Dialogue to writing Generalizations; from Invented Correspondence to Dramatic Monologues to Interior Monologues. Moffett's work illustrates that the realm of writing is much more varied than the five-paragraph essay. As he writes, "The purpose of climbing the abstraction ladder is not to reach the top; it is to know all the rungs" (page 477). In addition, Moffett's short story anthology, *Points of View,* makes an excellent companion text to his writing assignments.

Three of Moffett's assignments, for example, are under Memory Writing. In Assignment 1, Spontaneous Flow of Memories, the students are to look around them until something reminds them of something from their past—a place, a person, or an event. They write down the first memory and continue writing memories that they are reminded of by the previous memory. In Assignment 2, they write an expanded single memory of some incident that interests them from Assignment 1. Sample papers are dittoed, and in small groups the students help each other focus their papers. Questions are asked such as: "Does the writer still need more detail about some aspect of the incident? Does some of the detail seem unnecessary? Unnecessary for what? What seems to be the main point or feeling?" (pages 215–216). In Assignment 3, they rewrite a composed memory, a finished composition.

We need more work such as Moffett has done, both for the understanding of the art in writing and for the teaching of that art. We need other types of problems or activities that emphasize specific principles or techniques and that move in a sequence toward larger and more complex projects. We need exercises that focus on awakening perceptions and senses as tools of the writer.

Students need to read more student work, and, where possible, students need to experience the pride of publishing their work, even if this means only reproducing it for the rest of the class. We need to learn to critique student work in class with a focus on the gentle and the positive. ("What is happening here?" "What was discovered?") We need to involve students in positive-response groups and editing groups, and they need to learn to function in these two different roles. We need to use literature as models for writing but only in very specific ways. ("Look at how this guy did what we have been talking about.") We need to invite writers and artists to our classrooms to talk about their art. We need to lecture less, but when we do talk about art, we need strategies for effectively explaining the qualities of our art, and the specific useful principles. These are the principles that underlie good writing. Using Moffett's Stream of Consciousness Assignment as an example, we should be able to discuss with our students the elements of composition. "Did you use whole sentences or fragments? What kinds of words were most dispensable? Did you paragraph? If so, why? What kind of logic determined new paragraphs?...In a month, would you be able to follow it yourself? Does it have any particular beginning or end?" (Moffett, page 439).

There is another dimension to the writing workshop and its relation to teaching writing: The college preparation of English teachers needs to be changed. English teachers generally receive little training in writing beyond their methods class and literary history and literary criticism classes. Many teachers have not had experience in a studio type of class. The literary history and literary criticism classes are valuable, but the writing usually done in these courses represents a small part of the spectrum in the world of writing. Very few of us write literary criticism beyond school. What is worse, learning to write--for most of us--did not become an exciting, lifelong process. Most of the professors seemed to assume that I had already learned to write in freshman English, and they showed little interest in helping me to write better--much less to enjoy writing or to find a meaningful place for it in my life. And we tend to teach as we were taught. It is little wonder that many writing teachers do not write. I have seen teachers bristle at the mention of "creative writing." Few of them have had positive experiences writing. Few seem to realize that *all* writing is creative writing.

All of those semesters in college literature classes intimidated me. I was afraid to say that I was tired of laboring over papers that no one would want to read. I was afraid to say that I did not just want to study literature. Very humbly, I wanted to write "good stuff" myself. Admittedly, literature courses are not primarily writing courses. What I would call for in our college programs is a balance of writing and literature courses. Some colleges are already moving in this direction. I have heard people from other disciplines, especially at the graduate level, wishing there were more writing courses offered, writing courses that would be accessible and useful.

The writing workshop for teachers is one way we can help ourselves. If, with all the pressures and requirements placed upon English teachers, we have no time to write, then something needs to change. At the very least, our workshop was for us

an enjoyable meeting, partly on school time, where we could test our wings. At first those wings were a bit fragile.

I began this article with a quotation from Richard Calisch, past Poetry Editor of *English Journal*. He has found time in his life for both writing and high school teaching, and he enjoys both. His words state the problem and the solution: "We are trying to tell the kids that writing is important. Unless they see us doing it, they are not going to believe us." I believe that we have to be good to ourselves, and when we are, we will be good to our students.

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WHAT'S NEW IN BOSTON: TWO PROJECTS IN COMPOSITION

Paul Kelly

In a plane flying over Detroit last year, Harry Crosby, Chairman of the Division of Rhetoric at Boston University's College of Basic Studies, and Tim Donovan, Director of Freshman English at Northeastern University, were lamenting the lack of communication among composition teachers in the Boston area. They noted that they only discussed their common concerns at MLA and CCCC. Although there are fifty-eight colleges and universities in the Boston area, they knew directors of composition at fewer than a dozen schools. They agreed to do something about this problem, even though the last cooperative venture, the English Club, a literary discussion group that met on Saturdays, failed in 1963.

The result is two new organizations, one focusing on the concerns of directors of writing programs, the other on preparing graduate students in English to teach composition. Founded in January 1979, the Massachusetts Bay Conference of Writing Directors addresses the pedagogical and political difficulties its members face: workload, testing, departmental standards, the training of new faculty, syllabus design, the commitment of colleges or departments to composition. Its membership includes directors of instruction in writing at two- and four-year institutions, from as far away as Biddeford, Maine, and Providence, Rhode Island.

> ...[THEY] HAVE GIVEN MEMBERS AN OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS COMMON PROBLEMS, TO TAKE A COLLECTIVE POSITION ABOUT LEGISLATION..., AND TO SHARE INFORMATION THAT MIGHT HELP ADMINISTRATORS....

The second organization is more indirectly related to that in-flight conversation. Harry and Tim had discovered that they were both concerned about local graduate students' lack of training in composition. Since Harry, who is my chairman, knew that I was also interested in graduate training, he put me in contact with Tim. We are now developing a Boston Consortium for Training in Composition, which will offer graduate courses and in-service training in composition in the Boston area. We have not yet decided whether our affiliation with the Mass Bay Conference will be formal or informal.

The Mass Bay Conference has already held two meetings and elected Tim Donovan president. In spite of the initial ignorance of whom to contact, more than forty members, including directors of writing labs, department chairpersons, and writing

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program coordinators, have attended the meetings. The members come from a variety of institutions, including a technical institute, a conservatory, a school of pharmacy, a business college, private and public two-year colleges, and private and public four-year colleges and universities. Directors of writing from Bunker Hill Community College and Lasell Junior College are sharing problems and ideas with directors of writing from Tufts University and Harvard University. Divided into two discussion sessions and a business meeting, the one-day conferences have given members an opportunity to discuss common problems, to take a collective position about legislation such as that requiring competency testing, and to share information that might help administrators make better decisions about writing programs.

Each of the discussion sessions has focused on a theme, and we have been lucky enough to find a keynote speaker for each meeting. Kenneth Bruffee spoke at the January 20 meeting about the Writing Program Administrators and about collaborative learning in New York. Harvey Weiner spoke at the May 5 meeting about establishing departmental objectives, more specifically about testing. The sessions have included descriptions of writing programs, overviews of the New Rhetoric, and panels on course and staff development.

In addition to the twice-yearly meetings, members of the Mass Bay Conference have been polling one another to share information about their programs. Louise Dunlop of Bentley College conducted a survey of composition staffs. Her questions focused on the size of departments, the proportion of part-time faculty, the number of sections and students per section, and the length of the course. She also asked whether the writing course was required. Two facts that emerged from this survey were the almost universal dependence of English departments on part-time faculty for the teaching of composition, and the wide variety of teaching loads, ranging from seventeen per section to 150 for a full-time instructor. At least one chairman used this report to argue (successfully) for a lighter load for his faculty.

Martha Chew of the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Harry Crosby have sent out a questionnaire asking the directors to describe their syllabi, remedial programs, and students' needs. Maureen Goldman of Bentley College is receiving replies to a letter requesting information about testing in the local writing programs. These data will be compiled into a report she will give at the next meeting, the theme of which will be testing.

I wish I could report equal success for the Consortium for Composition Training, but it is still a plan rather than an actuality. A meeting has already been held, attended by representatives of all but one of the Boston universities with graduate programs in English. John Mahoney of Boston College, Carolyn Williams of Boston University, Richard Marius of Harvard University, Tim Donovan, and Rudolph Storch of Tufts all agreed to try to win the cooperation of their departments. (Judith Ferster of Brandeis University could not attend but is interested.)

At the meeting I raised five issues that we would have to address in order to make the Consortium a success. The first issue was a determination of the interests and needs of the graduate students we would serve. Because all the representatives had contact with the graduate programs of their departments, we could estimate the number of students the Consortium would serve (about fifty). We do not assume that all students would use the Consortium, but only those who want a concentration in rhetorical theory and practice in their coursework. At this point, we don't anticipate

dissertations in Rhetoric. But we do expect to offer two or three courses each semester, of sufficient variety to give the students a familiarity with a broad range of rhetorical theories and methods. We are polling the students to get a clearer picture of their interests and needs.

Though none of the graduate departments can now offer a concentration in rhetoric, collectively there is a pool of talent deep enough for us to offer a wide variety of courses. Among those suggested: history of rhetoric, current rhetorical theory, linguistic approaches to composition, diagnosis and remedy of student writing problems, a survey of writing programs (for which we would rely on the Mass Bay Conference for visitations and guest lecturers), and motivating students. A dozen other courses were suggested, and instructors for each. We were aware that New England has a number of experts in composition, but we were surprised to see how many.

We next discussed the obstacles that the prospective departments might have to overcome in order to join this program. Boston already has a consortium of graduate programs, but that consortium does not include Harvard or Northeastern. Neither does it initiate courses, as ours would. We plan to keep our Consortium for Training in Composition independent of the universities, so that the program is not identified with any in particular, but we will have a problem with assigning course credit. Each of the representatives of the departments has agreed to look into the problem with his own institution.

The fourth problem that we will have to solve is funding. Clearly, the universities themselves cannot afford to support the Consortium. We intend to apply for grants to carry us until we can be self-sufficient. We are thinking about offering in-service training to teachers of composition for a fee, and eventually supporting our activities through this means. At present, however, we do need start-up money, but we think the idea of the Consortium is promising enough to attract some grant money.

Last, we have to establish a governing body and an office for the Consortium. Because the courses we offer will include practica in teaching composition, the governing board might include the directors of graduate English at the member schools. We will need a director or coordinator for the Consortium, either full-time or half-time, and we will need an office. The requirement of independence raises problems for the location of an office and for grant applications. We have considered three alternatives: attaching the Consortium to the Mass Bay Conference (in effect, becoming a satellite of the Conference so that we could apply for grants under its constitution), establishing a separate office (which would, I believe, necessitate our hiring a full-time director and a secretary, making our overhead more expensive), or instituting a rotating directorship, cheaper but more cumbersome.

Both the Mass Bay Conference and the Consortium are promising developments in a part of the nation whose colleges have paid little attention to problems in composition. The Conference is, I think, already a success. If the Consortium can overcome the obstacles that now stand in its way, it may solve two problems at once. It can prepare graduate students to do the sort of teaching for which they are now being hired, and it may relieve the desperation that many graduate students are now feeling, by improving their prospects of getting a job. I would welcome any suggestions for either of the new Boston organizations. My address is: College of Basic Studies, Boston University, 871 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, Massachusetts 02215.

HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS AND FRESHMAN COMPOSITION

R. Baird Shuman

The University of Illinois at Urbana/Champaign has a long history of working strenuously to achieve articulation with public school teachers, and particularly with teachers of English. Since 1908, before there was a National Council of Teachers of English, the University lent its financial support to the Illinois Association of Teachers of English and has, through the years, borne all or part of the cost of publishing the *Illinois English Bulletin*. The University sponsors two yearly articulation conferences, one with secondary school teachers of English and one with community college teachers of English.

The University Associates in Rhetoric Program

Given this background, it is understandable that the University cooperated fully when, in February of 1978, I proposed that we bring to the campus each year a small number of highly qualified secondary school teachers of English to spend a year on the campus teaching freshman composition (still called Rhetoric at the University) and taking courses in the Department of English.

MANY SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS ARE RELATIVELY UNINFORMED ABOUT CURRENT RESEARCH...BECAUSE THEIR NORMAL TEACHING SCHEDULES ARE SO DEMANDING.

I proposed essentially that we aim ultimately to bring about ten teachers into the program each year. Each would teach three sections of rhetoric and would be required to take the Pro-Seminar in Writing during the fall semester. They might register for other courses as well, as their schedules permitted and their interest dictated. These teachers would be designated University Associates in Rhetoric. Each Associate would hold a master's degree in English or in English Education and would have taught long enough (usually six or seven years) to qualify for a sabbatical leave from the sponsoring district. Nominations for positions in the program were to be made by either the Superintendent of Schools or by the English Supervisor in the sponsoring district, which was asked to commit itself to paying the nominee half salary during his/her year of residence in the Program. The University agreed to pay the other half of the salary, with a minimum payment of $9,000 for nine months and a maximum of $10,000.

The Head of the English Department approved my proposal within twenty-four hours and passed it on to the Director of the School of Humanities, who immediately

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endorsed it. Within three weeks, an announcement of the program was sent to something in the neighborhood of one thousand superintendents of schools throughout the country, and nominations were invited from them.

Naturally, the time for implementing the program was shorter than I might have wished. I realized that it would not be easy for school districts to commit themselves to granting sabbatical leaves on such short notice. Nevertheless, before the May deadline had arrived, twenty-two applications had come in, and an initial group of six Associates was admitted. Of these, two had to defer coming until the 1979–80 academic year, and they are now in residence.

Now the program is quite well established. Notices go to all NCTE affiliate publications in the late summer, and many of these publications print notices of the Program. By the first week in October, announcements and nomination forms are sent to about one thousand superintendents of schools in all fifty states, as well as in Puerto Rico, Guam, and many Canadian provinces. Completed applications must be in by January 15, and the appointment of Associates is announced early in April.

The response to the Program has been substantial. National publicity in *Today's Education* has brought numerous inquiries, as will a forthcoming article in the *ADE Bulletin*. The 1979–80 group of Associates consists of seven people, two each from Illinois and Washington, one from New York, one from California, and one from Indiana. Last year's group came from New York, the District of Columbia, Utah, and Wisconsin.

Training Elements of the Program

Associates are provided with textbooks and with the instructor's handbook for freshman rhetoric shortly after they are accepted into the program so that they can familiarize themselves very early with the basic teaching materials used in freshman rhetoric at the University of Illinois. Appointees are expected to come to the campus a week before the beginning of classes—most of them arrive considerably earlier—to participate in a week-long orientation session which the Director of Freshman Rhetoric, the Assistant Director, and the six freshman advisors conduct. The topics covered in this orientation are as follows:

The Handbook: Any Questions?

An Overview of the Rhetoric Program

Tour of the English Building

Organizing a Coherent Composition Course

Designing a Course Syllabus

Teaching Thesis and Stance—Several Approaches

Teaching Grammar

Designing Effective and Varied Writing Assignments, and Evaluating Them

Evaluating Student Writing: The Graded and Ungraded Theme

The Department Bureaucracy

The First Day and the First-Day Handout

The First Impromptu

What Can I Really Expect From My Students?

An Introduction to the Library

It has been the consensus of the Associates that the orientation sessions are worthwhile and necessary. Each freshman advisor, who works for the full year with a group of those teaching in the program for the first time, be they Associates or teaching assistants, has at least one Associate in his/her group because we feel that the Associates should be exposed to as many of their teaching colleagues as possible and should have as much professional interchange as possible with everyone who is teaching in the freshman program.

When the orientation is over, Associates still have regular meetings with their advisors. They also work closely with the Director of Freshman Rhetoric, who teaches the Pro-Seminar in Writing in which they are enrolled. The Associates quickly become involved in the social and professional life of the Department of English and also tend to become active in the varied cultural life of the university community. They are introduced to the resources of the National Council of Teachers of English, whose national headquarters is in Urbana. The NCTE graciously runs a session to acquaint the Associates with the ERIC System and with the NCTE library.

Regular grading sessions are held during both semesters, during which everyone teaching freshman rhetoric is invited to do comparative grading of selected papers, much in the style of the Educational Testing Service readings. The Associates have attended these grading sessions faithfully and have found them useful.

As a part of the Pro-Seminar, each Associate does directed reading and research into at least three major elements of writing instruction, such as pre-writing, revision, spelling, and the use of dictionaries, the grammars of English, writing and the brain's right hemisphere, and writing and the other arts. Members of the Pro-Seminar each produce two short papers and one long paper on topics of their choice. Associates are encouraged to aim their papers at possible publication, and it appears that one coordinated effort that is being carried on by eight members of the Pro-Seminar, including four of the Associates, may be published as a monograph.

The rhetoric advisors are regularly available to all of their advisees and work very closely with them on a continuing basis. They observe in their advisees' classes and hold follow-up conferences after these observations. Videotaping facilities are also available to any instructor who wishes to see a playback of one of his/her classes.

Outcomes of the Program

Through the University Associates in Rhetoric Program, the participants are exposed to the realities of teaching composition to freshman students at the university level. This exposure gives them the most realistic view possible of what is expected of college students in their writing courses and of what secondary schools might best be doing to prepare students for college-level work.

The Associates also have available to them the combined resources of one of the strongest graduate English faculties in the country. Many of them study formally with members of this faculty. Faculty members are available on a conference basis

to all of the Associates. The Associates also make quite full use of the various libraries of the University, which has the third largest collection of any university in the country.

The University sponsors innumerable lecture series, film series, concert series, drama series, and the like, and these offerings are readily available to the Associates, who generally partake more fully of them than do our regular students.

Perhaps the most valuable part of the Program occurs through the interchange that the Associates have with each other and with others who teach in the writing program. In the university setting, ideas are put forth, challenged, tested, reshaped, and refined. Within the formal setting of the Pro-Seminar in Writing, the Associates are familiarized with a broad range of research data related to the teaching of writing. Many secondary school teachers are relatively uninformed about current research in the field because their normal teaching schedules are so demanding that they have little time for that sort of professional growth. Because most of the Associates have two-day- or three-day-a-week schedules, they have time to avail themselves of the resources that are here easily accessible to them.

In the long term, those who participate in the Program will return to their home districts as more informed, more enthusiastic teachers. Those who enter the Program are the top teachers in their districts, and their initial excellence appears to be enhanced by their participation in the Program.

A number of school districts that have sent teachers to the Program have used or intend to use them upon their return as resource people in staff development programs. In some cases, returning Associates will be granted released time from teaching in order to carry out staff development programs on a regular basis.

Returning Associates will unquestionably be well able to provide informed counseling to college preparatory students in their home schools. Having worked in a university program will give them a breadth of understanding about the demands of college that many of their teaching colleagues will not possess.

The University of Illinois at Urbana/Champaign is fully committed to the University Associates in Rhetoric Program and feels that it is providing yet another means through which the University can have intelligent articulation with secondary schools. The fact that the program is sustained over a nine-month period makes it superior in many respects to some of the other forms of articulation in which we have engaged and are engaging, even though each of these serves a valuable and unique function. It is our expectation to sustain the program in the years ahead and to do all that we can to work with school districts and with their teachers to make the pre-college educational experience as valuable as possible for college preparatory students.

LATER WE WILL WRITE

Susan Masek

Now we will Learn about writing,
A *very* important skill,
One used all through life.
Pay attention to all that is said.
Later, we will write.

Now we will Learn about sentences:
  Construction
  Punctuation
  Types
Later, we will write.

Now we will Learn about grammar:
  Parts of speech
  Usage
  Agreement
Later, we will write.

Now we will Learn about punctuation:
  Kinds
  Functions
  Problems
Later, we will write.

Now we will Learn about connectors:
  Transitions
  Conjunctions
  Punctuation
Later, we will write.

Now we will Learn about topic sentences:
  Purpose
  Placement
  Importance
Later, we will write.

Now we will Learn about outlines:
  Thesis
  Structure
  Sequence
Later, we will write.

Now we will Learn about paragraphs:
  Expository
  Descriptive
  Narrative
  Argumentative
Later, we will write.

Now, we will Write
A paragraph entitled,
"My Favorite Subject."
Remember all the rules.
Use an outline.
Let us all write!!

Now we will Correct our writing,
Mark the errors in red.
Watch for:
  Sentence structure
  Grammar
  Punctuation
  Connectors
  Topic sentence
  Outline (neatness counts)
  Paragraph development
We should not have any problems;
We have studied long and hard

Now we will Grade our writing.

Now we will Review—
Later, we will write!!

SUSAN MASEK teaches English and is head of the department at Sunnyside Junior High School, Tucson. This poem is one she wrote while a participant in the Southern Arizona Writing Project, summer 1979.

WHY SHOULD JOHNNY WRITE?

Timothy R. Donovan

Let me begin by apologizing for yet another reference to poor Johnny, who can't seem to do anything right these days. In fact, the question my title poses has less to do with Johnny than with his teacher. Let me also indicate that I'm not about to launch an attack on another easy target: the state of writing instruction in schools and colleges today. So much has already been said and done lately in the name of Good Writing--from the establishment of professional commissions to the installation of departmental hotlines for grammar problems. Rather, I am suggesting that perhaps it is time that teachers step back a bit in looking at the matter of literacy, that they go back to basics and ask, "Why Write?"

This deceptively simple question (first passed on to me by William E. Coles at the University of Pittsburgh) was my opener to a graduate seminar in the Teaching of Writing. Both secondary school and college teachers, veteran instructors and teaching assistants were asked to respond for themselves in an essay. I found their responses revealing, not so much for the product of their efforts, but for the process of their coming at the product. We found that this question vexed us out of shibboleths that had concealed the complexity of this enterprise we often call composition, for like a play within a play, "Why Write?" contained the drama of "Why Teach Writing?" In order to share some of the composing problems my seminar students encountered in preparing their papers, I will employ some rather conventional tactics. I am going to describe their difficulties by means of four rhetorical categories: purpose, audience, content, and style.

...LIKE A PLAY WITHIN A PLAY, "WHY WRITE?"
CONTAINED THE DRAMA OF "WHY TEACH WRITING?"

1. Purpose

One prevalent (but now wholly understandable) obstacle writers of this essay encountered was separating the general topic, writing, from who they were, teachers of writing. It was simply something they had a personal and professional stake in. So while the purpose of the essay ought to have been rather straightforward, it frequently was not. For example, some took it as an opportunity to blueprint their philosophy of teaching. Others carefully listed their assumptions about the role of language in the educational process (including their seemingly beatific association with it). Finally, a few teachers seemed compelled to attempt a Churchillian defense of the printed word itself.

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With the purpose of the essay so frequently lost sight of, we had to wonder if our vision in some way wasn't inevitably distorted by self-image or self-interest. How much of this was justifiable? How much was unpardonable? More important, did it make any difference to our teaching?

2. Audience

Since the tumult and the shouting regarding the so-called literacy crisis is frequently aimed at teachers of writing, it was not surprising to see them using the essay to respond to the current "exposés" in newspapers and popular magazines. Many sensed their audience to be other writing teachers perceptive about the sometimes naive and simplistic retreat, "back to basics." Others chose a more immediate audience--themselves, students (usually the sceptical type), or even me. (Some confessed they had, in student-like fashion, asked themselves, "What does he want?")

Again, all teachers were concerned about the way others perceive them and the activity of writing. They wanted, in fact insisted upon, approval for their teaching and appreciation for its social value. Yet they felt pressured by educational turmoil not always understood even by experts. The average writing teacher just seemed caught in the middle.

3. Content

Why, therefore, write? Most of the participants conceived of writing as a skill and/or art, the first associated in some way with practical utility, the second with intellectual enrichment. Those stressing the utility of writing predictably emphasized that it helps to get and keep a good job (and, by inference, to make good money), that it arms us against lawmakers and landlords, and that it keeps the technological revolution in check. On the other hand, those holding out for Cardinal Newman's ideal of the liberal arts insisted writing has value "in and of itself." It encourages dialogue with the self; it helps one to think clearly; it gives vent to one's creative impulses, evidencing in its highest forms the ascent of man.

This grab bag presented immediate problems. Few teachers could deny that all the uses of writing cited are valid in some circumstances, but promising such rewards to every writer would be clearly unrealistic. On the other hand, formulating just one use that might withstand all time and space would also be fruitless. For teachers, these are the basics. How does one offer writing to students as worthwhile? How does one fashion a coherent course that sustains the bargain? Finally, how does one reach those students not suited to the course's rationale? These difficult questions, one participant remarked, tempt us in answering "Why Write?" toward that last resort of teachers: "because it's required."

4. Style

Problems with content predictably led to problems in style. Tentative writers, plagued by false starts, produced a disjointed style, while the more confident exuded an authoritative style ringing with unbecoming platitudes. And in the middle were those who adopted a more detached view of their profession, as well as a tendency toward irony or sophistication that slid over the substantial problems raised by the issue.

The challenge to all writers of this essay, of course, was to avoid the clichés about writing that we all return to periodically and that must be the teacher's equivalent of our students' "this modern world of ours." Yet most avoided that challenge. Most took refuse in habitual phrases (we write to communicate. . . to know. . . to discover, etc.) that substitute for the honest thinking—and writing—the topic calls for. And most knew they were doing it, too.

I said at the outset that this exercise I have described seemed to me revealing. One can draw many conclusions, but here I will offer only two. The first is that if this survey is representative, then it's clear that there is as little agreement among teachers about *why* they should teach writing as there is about *how* they should teach writing. This, in and of itself, is not particularly surprising or even alarming. I suspect that if one were to survey a number of, say, physicians (to use a frequent analogy), one would find similar diversity, even disagreement, regarding certain practices and motivation. But doctors don't suffer nearly as acutely the lack of confidence in what they do every day as do teachers of writing, nor are they as likely to encounter with any great frequency someone who will assault their convictions with opposing convictions. Such a lack of confidence can only serve to undermine any profession, particularly one as vulnerable as the teaching of writing.

A second conclusion we may make is that the plea by parents, faculty, and administrators to have teachers produce students capable of writing "a simple declarative sentence" involves a more complex task than they imagine. The analogy with doctors often applies in painful fashion when students, like patients, come to us only when something is wrong. If writing instruction is not provided in a total, cumulative fashion, from grade one through senior year in college, then it may be that, like the nation that gets the leaders it deserves, we get the level of literacy we deserve. For the problems I have described with the "Why Write?" exercise simply mirror the prevalent discontinuity of writing instruction in schools and colleges generally. Teaching writing is hard work, but made harder still (and certainly less satisfying) not only when teachers lack confidence in their work but when that work has no points of reference in or out of the curriculum.

At the very least, "Why Write?" tells us that the question needs to be asked sooner and more often in the training of teachers. And we need to insist that it *be* a question, to imply, in other words, a certain openness about the issue that may, in the long run, lead to a more complete understanding—if not unanimity—regarding the teaching and learning of writing as we would like it to be.

BASICS -- A BACKGROUND FOR WRITING

Carolyn Ann Sheley

The old cliché about "necessity" and invention" covers the back-to-basics thrust in writing in my high school English classroom. Because basic achievement in English had become a concern of both the school district and parents of the community, the challenge was made to present units in writing that would provide the needed practice for pre- and post-tests administered by the school district.

In 100-word paragraphs students were to be able to demonstrate the ability to (1) use words correctly in context, (2) unify a paragraph that would include a clear statement of the topic, using only relevant detail, and (3) develop logical sequence. The ability to write a paragraph that met these criteria would be tested in September and again the following May. Although the program dealt with basics, it seemed a weighty problem to develop interesting writing assignments that would provide the needed practice throughout the school year as well as inspire the students to have a lasting concern for basic writing skills.

...THE STUDENTS FOUND A REASON,

BASED ON FUTURE EARNING POTENTIAL,

TO IMPROVE BASIC WRITING SKILLS...

Since the community also gave priority to practical preparation of their children for vocational choices upon graduation, a career program had been instituted within the school district. The Career Center on Moon Valley's campus, through its counselors, began relating to English faculty that lack of preparation in the basic English skills was a factor in nonemployment of many graduates. An art student might be talented in his field, we were told, but, as a commercial artist, he would also need to be able to express himself cogently to clients. The idea of writing about what probably concerns students most--their future vocation--subsequently developed into one of my more successful writing units. Here was an opportunity to combine into a practical unit basic skill practice with needed vocational orientation. And, there it was--Necessity causing Invention!

The first day of the seven-day unit was spent on orientation and explanation of the need for basic skills in writing, as well as the need for pre-planning and setting goals for one's future. A guest speaker from our Career Center was invited to present the idea of vocational planning to the students while I concentrated on the writing assignments. The guest speaker, through specific examples from recent employer interviews, reinforced the need for basics in English as part of being prepared for employment after graduation. No writing, however, was asked of the students on the first day.

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The second day two filmstrips with cassette commentary on choosing a career were presented. The filmstrip series focused on the characteristics that were common to each of six general vocational and personality classifications. The students also had the opportunity to view seven people with various educational backgrounds at work in highly diverse jobs. Students were asked to practice skills in notetaking at this time. Notes were later to be used as references for their writing assignments. On this day students were also asked to begin their first set of three lists. In five complete sentences, using only the simple sentence structure, students were to list five values that they presently held. These sentences were checked by other students in the class for correct mechanics and sentence structure before they were turned in to me.

The third day the class was divided into fourths; for the next four days one-fourth of the class would be visiting the Career Center while the other three-fourths remained in the classroom to work on their writing assignments. The remaining writing assignments would be completed at the students' own pace within the seven-day writing unit. The last day of the unit all students were back in the class, and the day was spent making final paragraphs.

Two more lists were assigned on the third day. One list covered five interests that students presently held. The same criteria--simple sentence structure plus accuracy in mechanics--were required. The final list required the use of the complex sentence. A list of relative pronouns and subordinating conjunctions was provided for the students' use on this practice list, which examined five abilities presently held by each student. These lists were graded quickly during class time and returned the following day. Correction sheets were required on each list, and final grades were withheld until the correction sheets were completed.

The remaining days were used to work in class on the paragraphs. The lists that the students had made, along with their filmstrip notes and their material obtained while visiting the Career Center, were used to help them fulfill the paragraph writing assignments.

Paragraph One was assigned with two criteria. One was to avoid errors in mechanics, and the other was to express a main idea in a topic sentence. Paragraph Two was assigned with the same criteria given for Paragraph One plus the added practice of eliminating run-ons, fragments, and comma faults. Paragraph Three was assigned with the same conditions given in One and Two plus the added requirements of demonstrating relevancy of support and logical sequence.

In all of the paragraphs, support for the topics was to be expressed through examples, facts, incidents, or reasons. Logical sequence could be ordered by location, from first to last, from last to first, by importance, by comparison or contrast, or by chronology. A list of transitional expressions was provided to aid students in writing the practice paragraphs. Each paragraph also had to contain at least six sentences illustrating both the simple and complex sentence structures.

The goals for each paper, as well as for success in basic writing skills, were correct spelling, correct punctuation, correct complete sentences in the structure of the simple and complex sentences, a clear main idea, and evidence of support for the main idea, including the avoidance of irrelevant and unclear statements. Each paper was then graded on the basis of a pre-established number of points in meeting the criteria. An errorless paper was worth 50 points (a grade of "1" or "A"). Every error lowered the score by 2. A rough draft, which I checked before the student

could proceed to the final paper, was required for each paragraph. Checking the rough drafts made it possible to give mini-lessons in grammar based on the errors made by the individual student. Because the writing practice had been monitored throughout the unit, the final drafts usually needed a minimum of marking. The drafts could be read and graded, therefore, on the basis of achievement in word meaning, unity, and coherence—that is, on whether the student was in fact communicating his ideas clearly to the reader.

The choice of topics centered on vocational interests, student abilities, and student values. Some of the topics were as follows: (1) What do you value most in your life and why? (2) Why is it important to begin thinking about your career while you are still in high school? (3) What is meant by the statement, "Your career will be a whole way of life"? (4) Why work at all? (5) What makes a haphazard attempt at vocational selection dangerous rather than satisfying? (6) What is the vocational interest for which you are best suited when you consider your values, interests, and abilities? (7) What are your guidelines for choosing and preparing a career?

A side effect of this unit developed. Students were able to practice focusing on a question and answering that question directly. Many students find this difficult when asked to answer the essay question for any purpose.

Follow-up was done when papers were returned for correction. A ditto was made of examples of the best and worst paragraphs for comparison with the students' own work. The overhead projector and transparencies were used to illustrate errors taken directly from student papers. For example, the term "fragment" was defined on the transparency. Students were given examples that they were asked to correct by actually marking on the transparency during the class discussion. They were also asked to label the missing part or tell what part of the sentence the fragment was—subject part, complement part, prepositional phrase, participle, dependent clause, and so forth. I have used traditional grammar in this unit to illustrate problems and discuss steps for correcting errors in student writing. Traditional grammar has been part of the back-to-basics thrust in my district. It may not be a final answer, but, when used with an attitude of flexibility and not as an end in itself, I find that traditional grammar works as well as any system of grammar in helping students improve their writing in the areas described in this article.

As a result of this writing unit the students found a reason, based on future earning potential, to improve basic writing skills in English. Learning to spell or punctuate or capitalize properly was no longer an isolated classroom chore. Learning to structure sentences properly was no longer something about which teachers talked at students. Communicating clearly and succinctly was no longer a skill reserved for the select few. The basics belonged to everyone. They just needed to be brought back.

"I LIKE IT!" DOESN'T MAKE IT GOOD:
WRITING IS (A) DISCIPLINE

Alma A. Ilacqua

Every instructor of writing and rhetoric has, at one time or another, experienced exasperation and excitement, exhaustion and edification, vexation and victory, tribulation and triumph. Every instructor who has devoted coutless hours striving to develop a workable scheme to help students writer better has alternated between the "I quit!" pit of failure and the "Eureka!" peak of success. Too often, the dejected drops to the pits are more frequent and of longer duration than the exalted flights to the peaks. In any event, the continuing problem of how to teach writing to college students in general and college freshmen in particular remains always a most challenging endeavor.

Indeed, what is more challenging than telling the tyro that page-long sentences, gobbledygook, jargon, and sentence fragments are legitimate for William Faulkner, Stuart Chase, Marshall McLuhan, and Tom Wolfe, but taboo for Frankie Frosh and Susie Soph. What is more challenging than teaching the tenderfoot that genre is a reality, structure is more than a whimsical figment of the perverse professor's imagination, and grammar and mechanics are neither quicksands nor barriers, but crutches and bridges. What is more challenging than informing the novice that "I like (don't like) it" and "I think it's good (bad)," while permissible as comments, are unacceptable substitutes for intelligent criticism and solid documentation. In short, what is more challenging than convincing a comp class that writing is both discipline and a discipline. As such, it can be taught by the devoted and learned by the diligent.

...NO SUBJECT IS INTRINSICALLY DULL;

WRITERS ALONE CAN CREATE DULLNESS.

For the past ten years, I have been a member of that host of teachers dedicated to improving the writing skills of our inarticulate and often illiterate college students. I teach every grade level from college freshman to senior. My repertoire includes such courses as expository writing, creative writing, magazine article writing, technical writing, advanced writing, the art and forms of advertising, news writing, and the perennial freshman composition. I have researched, experimented, devised, destroyed, and reassembled more methods than my files can hold. For most of these ten years, I have employed a workshop format that I revise and refine each semester. If I last long enough, I may ultimately get the hang of it! This workshop method is described in detail in my article entitled "A Laboratory Approach to Teaching the basics in College Composition Courses," which appeared in the February 1976 issue

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of the *Arizona English Bulletin*. Since my article has provoked a number of inquiries requesting specific information on individual lesson plans, I thought it might be useful at this time to isolate one lesson and present it fully.

The lesson I have chosen to describe in detail was used for my classes in Freshman Fiction and Composition in the fall semester of 1978. It was preceded by a series of lectures, discussions, outside readings, and class exercises on writing theory in general and narrative structure in particular. The lesson combined at-home writing with classroom editing. The in-class workshop utilized writing that was produced for the twelfth class meeting--precisely one month into the semester. This workshop was the third laboratory session based on compositions students were required to produce every week except during the first, or orientation, week.

Before I proceed with the details of the lesson in question, perhaps I should explain four essential points.

First: My basic premise was that ALL writing was communication. Aside from diary and journal entries, which were defined as purely private and personal documents, all writing was to be considered essentially public. It involved saying something *to* somebody. It employed accepted artistic principles and observed legitimate structural forms.

Second: All my lectures, outside readings, class discussions, and workshop segments were organized around a modal approach. Early in the semester, we covered writing theory in general, emphasizing such points as artistic unity, coherent organization, identifiable and consistent tone and style, and control of diction, grammar, and mechanics. Then we studied individual modes, analyzing them in terms of purpose and content, and comparing and contrasting them in terms of their structural parts.

Third: Early in the semester, writing practice in specific modes was limited to 150- to 250-word paragraphs. We theorized that a single paragraph was, essentially, a mini-composition possessing the same structural parts and observing the same artistic principles as a three-paragraph, three-page, or thirty-page manuscript. Later, we moved on to full-length pieces. The transition from single paragraphs to longer pieces was relatively simple.

Fourth: All my material, whether for lectures or workshops, utilized the students' own work, so that the learning experience was always dramatically (and sometimes painfully!) relevant. To protect the tender feelings of student writers, all writing samples were reproduced anonymously. However, as students developed professionalism, they often revealed their identities, voluntarily.

1. For me, registration day was very hectic. I had to go from place to place to get everything accomplished. When I first got to the administration building and was given my computer cards, one card had a note on it to see the head of the language department, Dr. Vetrano, because I had a conflict on my schedule. After I stood in a line that never seemed to move, Dr. Vetrano sent me to see my freshman advisor, Dr. O'Malley. He was in the complex part of the building. He fixed my schedule so that I could take everything I needed. Then I had to go back to the administration building and stand in lengthy lines. I had to stand in the language department line, the math department line, and the English department line which seemed to

take all afternoon. All this time I was switching courses the school gave me for ones that allowed me to take everything I needed. Finally I was all done, but it seemed like it would take forever to complete registration.

2. The first day in a new environment can often be quite confusing to the novice. For me, registration at Le Moyne was no exception to the rule. My difficulties began when I arrived at the room to which I thought I was assigned, only to find it empty and dark. Naturally, I did what most young adults do when faced with a crisis—I panicked. Immediately I set out through the labyrinth of corridors in a mad effort to find room two forty. I was lucky enough to run into a stocky, blond-haired gent by the name of Yost who was kind enough to direct me to where I was supposed to report. Little did I realize that my troubles were just beginning. Since I arrived late, I did not hear the full instructions for registering, but instead I received a pack of computer cards and some "self-explanatory" instructions. Now I had all the ingredients to make mental chaos. Two hours and twenty minutes later I emerged from the room, the last registrant to leave. My hands were clammy and trembling and my head was swimming. I felt as lonely as an orphan on Christmas and as worn as an old track shoe. With what little energy I had left, I plodded back to my room and flopped into bed.

3. Standing here in my eighth consecutive line this afternoon, I begin to reflect back on the mental torture Le Moyne College has put me through on this registration day. "It's really quite simple," the orientation director had said four hours and seven lines ago. She had explained how each student would receive a packet of five courses picked specifically for your individual major. I simply would have to fit my courses into a schedule; then submit the schedule to be approved. This simple two step procedure takes the average student not more than half an hour; however, it was not meant to be that simple for me. I received my first hint of disaster when I noticed on the outside of my packet, to the right of my name, was the abbreviation Rel. Stud. I was truly horrified when I peered into that dastardly little envelope and found four classes for a religious studies major and not those of a biology major. When I confronted the academic dean with my little problem I was told I must go through the formality of "dropping" the courses I did not want and "adding" those I did want. He did not explain that accompanying each change was a fifty foot chain of people also wanting to alter their schedules. Now as I stand here thinking back on these events that took place earlier this afternoon, and as I hear those words I had been living in fear of—"Sorry, you have the wrong line"—I begin to contemplate the advantages of suicide.

4. Paul could hardly believe what was happening. After all he had heard about the inefficient methods of registration at Le Moyne, he was actually getting the classes he needed at the times he wanted. While he was standing in line to receive his last computer card for his required Philosophy course, his thoughts remained uninterrupted by the problems encountered by those around him. Throughout the auditorium, mayhem characterized the registration process; but Paul barely noticed. Rather, he was thinking about his ideal schedule and the amount of free time he would have not only to study but to party. As the line moved forward and Paul took a step closer to actualizing his goal, he was abruptly confronted with a feeling of anxiety.

This was too good to be true. What if this one and final course was closed by the time he got to the front of the line? He frantically began searching through the academic schedule to find an alternative section that would have little effect, if any, on his present schedule and found that if his first selection was closed, he would have to change his entire schedule. His anxiety increased. The line that had once moved along so swiftly seemed to be suspended in time. Paul looked around and saw all those troubled faces of which he had previously been unaware. He now understood what his classmates were going through. Why should he, a mere freshman, be exempt from a scheduling problem? The odds were against him. As he grew more impatient, he peered over the shoulder of the person standing between him and the registration table. He heard the individual ask for the section Paul wanted. He watched intently as the department head handed the individual a computer card and initialed his master schedule. This was it, he thought. He walked to the table and felt his heart pounding so hard that he could barely hear himself ask for Philosophy 101-01. The department head hesitated, and Paul braced himself for the dreaded moment. "Well," said the department head, "you're in luck. This is the last opening." After Paul had his master schedule initialed, he walked away clutching the computer card in his hand. "Well I'll be damned," he said softly as he grinned from ear to ear.

These paragraphs were written following lectures, illustrations, discussions, and outside readings on narrative structure. In order to give the students some direction, and in order to provide a common base for workshop comparison of student writing, I had offered the bland topic, "The first day at college." Students had been told they could do anything they wanted with the subject. They could focus on any facet of that "first day." The narrative could be fictional, factual, or fantastical. The tone could be humorous or serious. The only provisos had been that (1) the writer's intention be clearly communicated and (2) the writer be in control of structure, tone, grammar, and mechanics.

The *aim* of the lesson was to make students appreciate writing as an art form. The *means* of achieving this goal was to employ an intelligent and informed critical approach that recognized objective and accepted norms for evaluation.

The workshop experience was organized into two phases, each phase subdivided into a three-step procedure. Phase one progressed as follows.

First: I distributed the dittos. Many students had chosen to narrow "The first day at college" to the specific event of "Registration day." Therefore, in order to facilitate comparisons, I had deliberately chosen four "Registration day" themes as laboratory samples.

Second: I reminded students that they were to visualize themselves as professional critics or as editors of a student publication. I then requested that they quickly read all four paragraphs.

Third: When they finished reading, I asked how they would rate the paragraphs on a scale of one to four, with four being the best and one being the weakest.

Despite the fact that the paragraphs were obviously arranged in an ascending order of excellence, little unanimity existed regarding ratings. Most students recognized that paragraph one was the weakest piece of writing. However, they failed to note that the paragraphs were reproduced in precisely the 1-2-3-4 weakest-to-best sequence that I had asked them to discover. Furthermore, despite earlier precautions against unadulterated opinion, most students were unable to be either objective or analytical. Many alleged critics impressively pontificated, "It's great" or "It's awful." A few modestly and rather helplessly acknowledged, "It seems pretty good (pretty bad), but I just can't explain *why*."

At this point I felt we were ready for phase two.

First: I reminded students that the subjective and unsupported "like/don't like" and the dogmatic and undocumented "good/bad" were not permitted to stand as testimony. In addition, I challenged students to recapitulate the basic questions any good editor/critic asks himself about any piece of writing: (1) What is the writer's central purpose? (2) How well has he achieved this purpose?

Students noted that, in this case, the writer's purpose was partially limited by the assignment, since he had to produce a *narrative* on a stipulated subject. However, narrowing the topic, selecting a suitable theme, and communicating the whole with style and clarity were the chief artistic challenges faced by the student writer. In other words, how well he achieved his purpose depended on how successfully he handled narrative structure, how creatively he developed a potentially pedestrian topic, and how carefully he controlled language, grammar, and mechanics.

With some judicious prodding, students also recalled that, although all writing was characterized by three-part structure, recognizable differences existed in the ways artistic unity could be achieved in a narrative as opposed to, say, a piece of expository prose or a passage of pure description. While *all* introductions fell under the well-known, well-worn, but perennially valid generalization about "AIDA,"* specific ways of achieving provocative leads might be applied to specific modes. Even though *all* successful conclusions could be vaguely described as "satisfying," precise ways of arriving at these "right" endings differed according to form. While the central mass connecting opening to closing might be said generally to require proper organization and development, the method of achieving these ends was dependent on genre. Students also reiterated the point that all writing, regardless of mode, demanded total control of vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. This preparatory discussion offered excellent opportunity to review and list on the chalkboard specific similarities and differences in form and structure. Thus, the awareness of the objective norms by which the paragraphs could be intelligently discussed was reinforced.

Second: Following the above discussion, I divided students into heterogeneous groups. I asked *all* students to keep in mind the original problem of "rating" the four paragraphs. In addition, I assigned each group to a specific paragraph for which they were to function as primary critics or senior editors.

Third: When students were asked to present their formal critiques, all groups

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*Students were familiar with the Attention-Interest-Desire-Action requirement quoted in some texts and often attributed to advertising copywriters.

now rated the four paragraphs fairly accurately. All did a commendable job of evaluating the individual paragraphs for which they were primarily responsible.

For example, they determined that, even though the first two paragraphs covered essentially the same mundane series of trivial incidents, the second was far superior to the first. They discovered that the second writer succeeded in giving the rather slight material character and drama by means of occasionally imaginative writing. They saw, too, that while the piece contained some problems with wordiness, diction, and mechanics, it managed to achieve artistic unity. Unlike the first paragraph, which promised "hectic" but delivered only tedium (ambiguously and ungrammatically, at that), number two lived up to its pledge. It supported the notion of "confusing" by contrasting expectation ("The room to which I thought I was assigned") with reality ("only to find it empty and dark"). It further reinforced the abstract idea of confusion by introducing the concrete image of a "labyrinth." It sustained the idea of a "novice" confronting a "new environment" by tracing the character from initial vigorous, albeit abortive, effort to "trembling" and "clammy"-handed exhaustion. It developed a "panicked" but fighting freshman into the defeated "last registrant" described in similes such as "lonely as an orphan on Christmas" and "worn as an old track shoe." It traced the progress of the protagonist from energetic "mad" to forlorn "plodded" and "flopped." Throughout, it achieved a consistently light tone by means of judicious use of hyperbole and irony.

Students also saw that paragraph three was stronger than two. Number three successfully handled the mundane ideas of long lines and endless delays with concrete details such as "eighth consecutive line...four hours and seven lines ago...fifty foot chain of people." Notwithstanding wordiness in the opening and conclusion, grammatical flaws in point of view, misplaced parts and parallelism, and mechanical errors of punctuation, this paragraph built to a nice climax. It progressed smoothly through denouement to conclusion, and it loyally maintained its original theme and tone.

Finally, students noted that paragraph four, while far from perfect, best fulfilled the requirements of the assignment. Here the paragraph truly began with the dynamic, unstable situation that characterizes narrative writing. It handled the complication nicely, sustained suspense, achieved an effective climax, and wound down swiftly to a dramatic conclusion. Despite some diction problems ("mayhem...to party ...actualizing...This was too good to be true...individual"), despite ambiguous or awkward passages ("his ideal schedule...little effect, if any, on his present schedule"), and despite minor grammatical flaws ("if his first selection was closed"), this paragraph best achieved the writer's central purpose.

The segment of the Freshman Fiction and Composition course just described achieved its educational objectives. The aim of the lesson--appreciating writing as an art form by applying writing theory to the specific experiences of writing and criticism--was successfully implemented. The workshop exercise reinforced my two favorite theories: (1) writing is hard work, but it is an art form that is both teachable and learnable; and (2) no subject is intrinsically dull; writers alone can create dullness. Finally, as I anticipate the study of fiction, which by departmental edict makes up a portion of the first-semester freshman English course, I expect the principles of narrative structure and the theories of artistic unity learned in the composition segments will provide valuable preparation for the appreciation of fiction not only as entertainment, but as an art form.

TEACHING COMPOSING COLLABORATIVELY

John Clifford

Because they do not understand that writing is a process that begins with false starts and unexpected discoveries, most inexperienced writers are reluctant to follow glimpses of ideas in exploratory drafts. If they did, their original focus might need adjustment, alterations in sentences and paragraphs would become necessary, and they might then need to rethink their entire conception.

This messy, recursive search for balance and harmony among parts is, however, crucial to authentic, developed prose. In order to make this revision process part of our students' composing attitudes, they must first see the need for it by experiencing the entire composing process themselves. They need to see that it works, that it does help us produce stronger prose. Breaking and stretching the writing process into manageable stages is, therefore, an appropriate teaching strategy. Writers need to make complex adjustments not only in syntax and organization, but also in their original ideas; they should, therefore, see firsthand the effect their early, tentative efforts are having on a real audience. This can effectively happen if we use group work as part of our students' training in composing.

...AN IMPORTANT PART OF BECOMING AN EFFECTIVE WRITER IS TO BEHAVE LIKE ONE.

Because inexperienced writers seldom know how to judge the reactions or anticipate the questions of alert readers, I often use small collaborative groups to add a social context. In traditional approaches, the audience for student writing is almost exclusively the instructor, an academic authority few young writers feel comfortable writing for. Although our comments on student essays are usually reasonable and humane inquiries for more clarity, more specific, concrete details, young writers rarely see our marginalia as helpful proddings to sharpen and develop their writing. Although we are skillful and perceptive readers of student prose, perhaps we are not the most effective. Language is so strongly tied to identity that I'm sure my comments on student papers have often been perceived, too personally, as a judgment or evaluation of the writer, not the writing. Apprehension does not disappear when students are asked to read and comment on each other's work, but they are more likely to heed the comments of classmates also struggling with effective ways to get closer to their intended meaning.

In a classroom where students share the responsibility for reading essays, writers can learn how editors work. In a collaborative classroom the instructor tries to arrange situations where students can get immediate, specific feedback on their

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exploratory early drafts. As in speaking, students begin to make adjustments in tone, specificity and coherence when it is clear that the intended idea is not being received. In conversation, we grimace when puzzled; we shift, shrug, and shuffle when perplexed. Since writing does away with these visual signals, it makes sense to arrange students in small groups so they can read stages of their essays to each other in order to duplicate intuitive oral adjustments by trying to be responsive readers of each other's work.

For the first paper, I ask students to recall some event from childhood: perhaps a time when they were lost, sad, angry, or disappointed. After a few minutes of brainstorming, I ask them to quickly write down as many concrete details as they can remember. After students briefly sketch some details, I again ask questions. This time, however, students respond orally. Who was there? How did you feel? Did that event define you in any way? What was the sequence of the event? By quickly probing possible leads with a dozen students in five minutes or so, a tone is established that is central to writing: the reader's attempts at understanding hinge on the writer's obligation to provide specific, concrete details. A conscious listener (and eventually reader) wants to be taken through a narrative clearly; therefore, possible questions need to be anticipated and answered. If not, the reader's good faith wanes as the writing fails to keep its promises. This oral interplay provides a comfortable bridge from the student's natural oral competence to the more demanding structures of written discourse. It also signals an open, participatory interchange.

Students then do ten minutes of focused free writing, trying to pry open their memories and follow the the flow of ideas and details, ignoring, for the moment, the promptings of rhetorical order and decorum. By stressing the need to write continuously, students are helped to bypass the inhibiting, prescriptive principles of surface correctness. Attention to the conventions of mechanics, spelling, and organization is misplaced in these early efforts. Later, when ideas need to be clarified and sentences and paragraphs need to be well formed, the requirements of rhetorical conventions can be met. For now, writers should experience the exhilaration of fluency while developing needed confidence as they generate hundreds of words of prose. Besides tapping natural verbal competence, this informal prewriting heuristic can help writers clarify their ideas in a relaxed, natural voice.

I am always pleased by how enthusiastically these inarticulate writers take to free writing. With the pressure for a public standard of performance eliminated, blocks are suddenly written through and more serious, exploratory writing emerges. Of course, this spontaneous recollection has not been written for readers; it is, rather, a tool for writers to delve into their experiences, discovering, exploring, and clarifying. The shaping, focusing, and editing will follow, but first the writer must find out what he/she wants to say, and how.

In the prewriting stage, students are making choices that will affect later work. After a student has, for example, written about some mournful wandering over a nightmare beach, I arrange the class into groups of five and have them read their work-in-progress to the four other writers in their group. Although some are uncomfortable about this at first, they soon realize that everyone is searching and groping in the same tentative, halting fashion. Since free writing has no public standards to uphold, except the writer's need to discover what he/she wants to say, there is no pressure to please or communicate.

Students can become perceptive editors for each other by first listening carefully to the free writing, and then by answering a few questions: What is this writer trying to say? What should be expanded? What is the best part? Why? What parts seem unconnected or unclear? What details seem significant? Here, the written responses are most valuable. Students can answer these questions in three or four minutes of free writing. Before the writer begins writing the first draft, then, he/she can sift through the reactions of the writing group, much as you and I would in discussing an idea with colleagues. After all, an important part of becoming an effective writer is to behave like one.

The written comments from the first small group help the writer narrow the focus and fill in the narrative details that indicate to a conscious reader that the writer is aware of his/her world. But a narrative is not, by itself, an essay; therefore, the assignment for the next class meeting is to write a good first draft in two parts: a focused autobiographical narrative describing, perhaps, the phantasmagorical vision of a lost child searching for familiar faces; the second part, an explanatory comment on that experience. To develop the latter, I ask several questions: Have you learned something from this experience? Do you think this experience and your reactions to it are familiar to others? Is what was true for you also true for most? Have you changed since then? How?

Embedded in the essay, then, is a structure that moves writers from the specifics of experience to generalizations and insights that can, with guidance, evolve into a thesis statement. And this controlling idea can subsequently generate more insights that can in turn be supported by experience. This is an intuitive path for the experienced writer, but one that the novice needs to travel many times before the journey becomes habitual.

Students bring these essays to the next class with four copies for their group. First each student silently reads the essay and then the group follows the text as each essay is read aloud. After each reading, students again comment on each other's writing-in-progress, but this time the questions are more specific: What concrete details in the narrative are effective? What needs more specificity? What would you like to hear more of? Less of? Does the generalization seem true for you? Are the connections between sentences clear? Because this is a beginning assignment, questions here are not yet as demanding or as directed as would be necessary later on in the term.

Although most writers are initially timid in small groups, they will learn to demand from their audience precise, complete feedback: How does the conclusion sound, too flat? What do you think this reference meant? Is my generalization too personal? After the routine of interaction is established, my question sheet can be eliminated. The point here is to try to engage students in a serious discussion about the effect the writer's words are having on them. For many of these writers this is the first time their work has been openly and seriously discussed by equals, an experience that many eventually find exhilarating and illuminating. And since their essays are still evolving, still tentative and flexible, the defensiveness usually accompanying the finished product is diminished.

By the end of this second group session, students are ready to prepare a good copy for the third class period. This time, however, their generalization paragraph needs to come first. This is an important reversal since most expository writing

develops and supports what it first asserts. That initial assertion is the writer's commitment to the reader and, in this case, that promise is fulfilled with the autobiographical narrative. Students often begin their essays with a focused paragraph about, for example, the trauma of early separation, or a child's first proof of total dependence or, perhaps, the realization of how dependent we are on the kindness of strangers. The opening thesis is followed with a detailed illustration from experience. This movement between the general and the specific is, with variations, a basis for most competent prose.

When the writers bring their revised essays to the third class, I assign each student an editor from another group to read the final draft. To sharpen editing and proofreading skills, I ask each student-editor to note misspellings and punctuation and other lapses. I use these papers, then, as a way to schedule lessons on the group's most pressing needs and also, for balance, as a source for illustrating examples of strong writing. These steps need modification, depending on how much information the class needs and how much writing experience they have had, but for most freshman writers, my sequence works well.

Each succeeding assignment can pose more sophisticated problems that stretch both imagination and organizational resources. Ideally, these assignments would be sequential, leading from autobiographical concerns to more public expository forms. For the beginning assignments, I want to emphasize the reader's need for specificity and also to demonstrate how thesis sentences can emerge from ordering and contemplating experience.

Most freshman writers doubt their competence as prose critics; they hope for charity from their eventual critics. They are often initially reluctant to be fully open. After bandying around, "Sounds pretty good to me," and "I liked it; it was okay," students can learn to give specific, accurate criticism. But the process of learning to be a responsive, useful critic takes time: yet tentative, hesitant banalities can and will give way as they learn to adjust to the dynamics of small group work.

Instructors hoping to use collaborative groups to strengthen the teaching of the composing process will eventually be rewarded with more active, conscious readers and writers. Their close reading of each other's work is also more useful than the traditional technique of analyzing polished professional models. Reading and writing are surely the touchstones of any responsible freshman course, but these materials can be provided more efficiently by the writers present. As they examine each other's work, they are indirectly but effectively learning to become more conscious, objective critics of their own work. Since this training is often repetitive, patience and faith are needed in good measure. Here failures seem darker than in the comfortably bland, teacher-dominated classes, but thankfully, since students are learning how to learn, the successes are richer and deeper.

By basing instruction in writing on process and collaboration, writers can learn to exploit the inevitable frustrating blocks of composing. And by confronting the major faults of traditional composition instruction with its misplaced emphasis on the finished product and its avoidance of the social context of writing, the way is cleared to make our writing courses dynamic and productive, capable of training more effective, enthusiastic writers and learners while demonstrating that the nature of composing can help us develop exciting alternatives to the traditional methods. Perhaps our quest for a teaching method that will create autonomous writers is not so quixotic: it may, paradoxically, begin with collaboration.

DAY AFTER DAY: THE JOURNAL AS AN AID TO TEACHING COMPOSITION

Nancy Mairs

How much should they write?

There's no magic number of words per week to guarantee our students the literacy that educators, public officials, and the students themselves and their parents are calling for with increasing intensity. But, knowing that writers don't become good writers except by writing, we can at least agree that they should write "a lot." And those of us in the classroom know, as well, that what we mean by "a lot" is a lot more writing than we can possibly read and mark closely.

What, then, are our options? One, too frequently taken, is infrequent writing assignments. Even in composition classes, teachers may rely on easily graded exercises in grammar, usage, punctuation, failing to push students into the crucial experience of actual *composing*. Another alternative is simply not to mark some or most of the writing students do. But despite studies showing that students whose papers are discarded progress as well as those whose papers are marked scrupulously, no writer likes to be ignored. We are dealing with people, not writing machines; and the acquisition of writing skills should not be divorced from the acquisition of a sense of competence and personhood.

I AM DELIGHTED NOT JUST BY THE QUANTITY OF WRITING MY STUDENTS DO BUT BY THE INCREASING EASE THEY SHOW WITH THE ACT OF WRITING ITSELF.

The alternative I prefer, because it enables students to generate huge quantities of writing without shredding my sanity, is journal keeping. It is a very flexible technique: I have used it in high school and in remedial, average, and advanced sections of freshman composition; and I have seen it used, with gifted children at least, in elementary and junior high school. It may be adapted to any subject matter and made as structured or free as individual teachers find suitable for themselves and their students. Because I am currently using it with advanced freshman composition students, I shall speak about it in that context.

The stated objective for my freshman composition students is the production of 5,000 to 7,000 words of writing during the semester. My private objective is to have

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them write twice that amount. I do not, however, want them simply to write twice as many formal papers. For one thing, they probably could not do so, and I certainly could not read and mark that many papers if they could. But more important, I want them to do a different kind of writing. The assigned writing is entirely public--the papers are expository, with a heavy emphasis on argumentation, and at least one paper must be documented--in short, what James Britton et al. in *The Development of Writing Abilities (11-18)* characterize as *transactional* writing. With no desire to belittle the importance of the transactional function, I believe that students should experience writing as more than a means of conveying information, persuading the reader to a point of view, or (the cynic in me prevails) satisfying the teacher enough to get a decent grade. They should be encouraged to think of writing as a frequent, natural activity whereby they may come to a clearer understanding of themselves and the world around them. The journal, then, is a place for private, *expressive* writing.

My procedure for assigning and checking journals is simple. I announce to the students on the first day of class that they will be keeping journals during the semester and tell them to begin right away. I stress the fact that although I will read the journals, I will never mark them for spelling, punctuation, or any of the other bugbears that haunt students' nightmares when they "write themes." The journals will be graded exclusively on quantity: an average of five entries per week earns an A; four entries, a B; and so on. A single paragraph qualifies as an entry, though most students in fact write more. I encourage each student to find a form he/she likes; and I have had journals kept in everything from tooled leather diaries to sheaves of crumpled theme paper.

The aspects of the assignment that cause the most bafflement are, first, that the grade depends solely on the frequency of the students' writing and, second, that they can write anything they like. They may keep diaries if they like; they may prefer a format like the Renaissance commonplace book; they may clip articles or cartoons and comment upon them; imaginative students may want to experiment in poetry or prose; if worst comes to worst, they may write grocery lists! To begin with, they have some interesting misconceptions about journal-keeping: One student said it was an activity he hoped he had left behind in third grade; one called it "busywork"; another wrote that he had once believed "that only dainty little girls fantasizing about future boyfriends used journals." To help them overcome the idea that keeping a journal is juvenile, idle, or effeminate, I have them read excerpts from such journal writers as Thoreau, Woody Allen, Anais Nin. Even so, a few usually have trouble getting started (they are used, after all, to being told what to write), and so I provide some structure for them at the beginning. Also, occasionally in class I give them a "free entry," usually when I want them to reflect on some aspect of writing that we're working with. Few students need help for long, arriving soon at some format that suits them. The diversity of the products is always stunning: I have received deeply personal reflections on encroaching madness; closet dramas about penguins; furious diatribes against journal keeping.

I collect the journals three times during the semester, and I read them fast, because I don't like to keep the students and their journals apart for long. I read every word (impractical, and not even necessary--I choose to because I am so often fascinated), pen in hand only for responding. *No corrections.* I comment briefly at the end, initial and date my comments, and put a grade for the number of entries averaged. Each of the three journal grades during the semester is equivalent to a paper grade. Reading every word, I can grade thirty journals in a weekend; if I weren't so curious, I could easily do twice that number.

But I believe that I'm accomplishing far more than holding my head above the high-water mark of the paper flood. I am delighted not just by the quantity of writing my students do but by the increasing ease they show with the act of writing itself. For some students, of course, journal keeping doesn't work; they don't do it at all, or they do it perfunctorily, for the grade. Far more of them, however, find themselves enjoying this writing assignment although they've always "hated to write." And a few really take off, like the student who suddenly discovered that he had generated forty pages of autobiography in two days. Through keeping journals, students can attain a new vision of writing, not as an activity carried out to satisfy externally imposed requirements but as an act offering personal fulfillment. "I liked the journal idea," one student wrote; "it really satisfied the need to write sometimes." Another wrote of the personal knowledge his journal had given him, the ability to "locate the origin and the effect of certain feelings," to see himself "changing from a frantic freshman to a calm, confident college student." Here is a vision of writing as a human activity, arising from one's own wants and needs--a vision essential to real, not mechanical, involvement in the composing process.

A few words of caution. First, the journal belongs absolutely to the student. Although I tell students that I will read their journals, occasionally they find themselves writing things they'd rather not share. In this case, they need simply write "don't read" beside such passages, and I will not read them. Occasionally, also, the journal will become so thoroughly a student's possession that he/she will insist that I make no marks in it; if so, I put my comments and grade on a separate sheet of paper. Second, students may reveal startling and disturbing ideas and feelings; I never judge them, of course, but I have had occasion to recommend sources of help to a few students. A teacher who is uncomfortable with such a role would probably prefer to assign a more structured, objective journal. Finally, journal keeping is everyone's responsibility--including the teacher's! You can't very well say to students, "Don't knock it till you've tried it," unless you've tried it. So if you're thinking of starting your students on journals, begin by buying a spiral notebook...a theme pad...mine is a black bound book with maroon trim and white lined pages....

MAP WORK: A PROCESS-ORIENTED STRATEGY FOR TEACHING ORGANIZATION

Rex L. Veeder

All too often we are forced by time and work load to evaluate the student's product and ignore the writing process. What we've needed for some time is a way to accurately monitor a student's ability to design an essay. The traditional approach, outlining, meets with varying degrees of success, and an alternative method is map work.

I recall a recent trip to southern California and the problems of traveling without a map. We've all experienced the "thrill" of hit-or-miss navigation while driving. The same holds true for writers; a writer needs a map of the essay in order to explore new ground—new roads of thinking. Seasoned essay and article writers carry such maps in their head and are able to visualize a completed work before they begin. The novice, however, is seldom practiced enough to recognize the overall design of an essay, and without a clear picture of where he is going the writer cannot exhibit commitment to the task at hand.

...A CERTAIN LEVEL OF FRUSTRATION IS A NECESSARY INGREDIENT IN INVIGORATING PROSE...

The student writer needs, therefore, a fully developed mental picture of an essay in order to produce the kind of essay we've come to accept as a composition. This picture is an essential ingredient in the writing recipe, and a student's ability to literally draw us a picture of an essay allows us to account for his sense of composition or lack of it.

I recently asked students in my Senior Composition class to draw a picture of what they thought an expository essay should look like. I explained that I was least interested in artistic accomplishment and most interested in their sense of essay design. I defined essay design as the way an essay looks and acts on paper. This initial explanation was, of course, somewhat abstract, and it did frustrate a number of students. If you have a class that is easily frustrated and would rather not deal with the resulting behavior, you might want to hand them a map first and then quiz them. I chose to use their response as a pre-test, however. I believe that a certain level of frustration is a necessary ingredient in invigorating prose; students who find answers too easily stop looking for them. At any rate, following you will find four student responses to my request.

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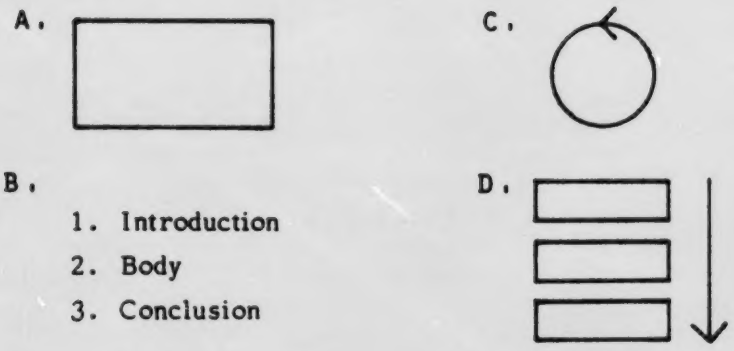
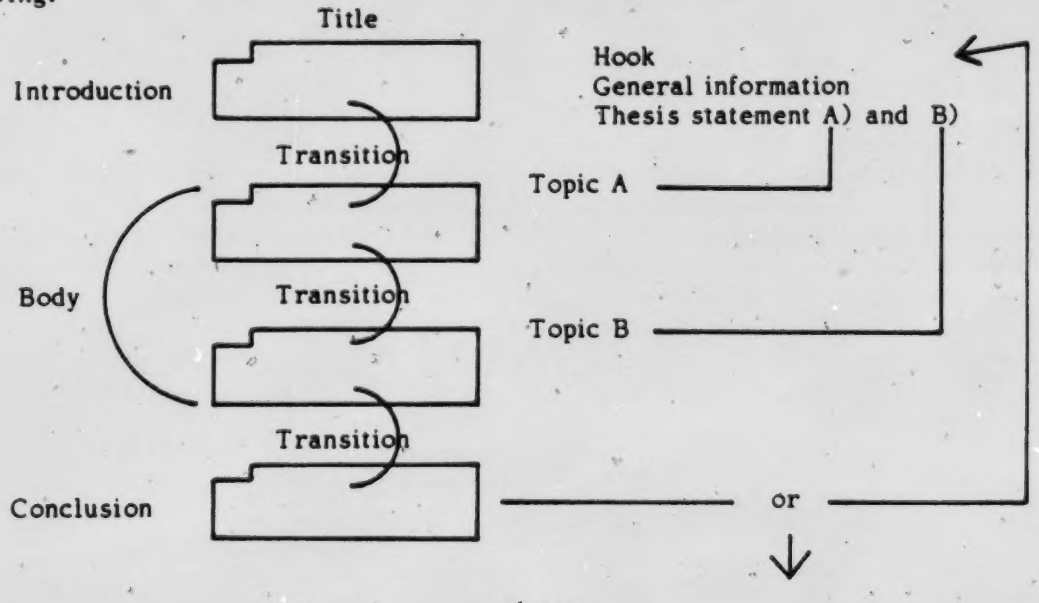


I chose these examples because they represent a fair sample of high school students' mental pictures of an essay. Student A is lost in a box and will have problems writing paragraphs and organizing an essay. In other words, the student lacks the sequential skill necessary to write a complete composition. Student B, on the other hand, has an elementary understanding of sequence but lacks an understanding of essay design. The student will think she understands how an essay should be written but will be lost the moment she attempts outlining or writing. Student C was kidding. It was a "shot in the dark," but he came close to a truth concerning essay development. Students often know more than they think they do, and this student probably writes essays that approach completeness. What he sees is that each essay can be a circle, starting with a single idea and ending with it. What he's missing is the complexity of the essay and a visual sense of the elements that make the essay function.

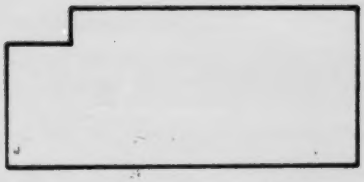
Student D came very close to an accurate description of an exposition. She saw that the English essay proceeds in a more or less straight line; we have come to expect essays to travel from point A to B to C with as little interference as possible. Other cultures have different expectations regarding how an argument or explanation should proceed, and I suspect these different communicative imprints account for many problems foreign or bilingual students have in our classes. Nevertheless, we have come to expect linear progression in the essay, and student D depicted that progression along with paragraph breaks. A more fully developed picture would include the following:



The essay map should include the placement and function for each essay part. Beginning with the introduction, the map suggests that a student should include a "hook," a term widely used by article writers. The hook's function is to interest the reader, whether by narrative, description, or challenge. The hook is followed by general information about the subject at hand. Finally, a working thesis is introduced. I try to make a distinction between a working thesis and a final draft thesis. In general, a working thesis is a restrictive thesis detailing the topics for each paragraph in the body of the essay. For example: "Writing an essay is a way to think about problems because (A) it forces a writer to slow down his thoughts, and (B) it allows the writer to organize those thoughts into a coherent whole." The working thesis may or may not appear in the final draft as is, since it is mainly to give the *writer* direction.

After a transitional device, either at the end of the introduction or at the beginning of the first paragraph in the body, the writer develops the particular information concerning part A of the working thesis. This also allows the writer to write topic sentences before beginning a draft because the writer knows the specific information designated for each paragraph. It should be noted that a teacher may include various paragraph development techniques at this point and list possible approaches beside each paragraph.

BODY:
Paragraph A



Topic sentence A
Example
Explanation of example
Concluding sentence

The next paragraph follows the same pattern; it develops part B of the working thesis, while the conclusion either returns to the thesis or proposes a plan of action. As before, the function of the conclusion may or may not be specified by the teacher—i.e., propose a solution, bring up a new point for consideration.

All this is not to negate any writer's "inborn" sense of design. A map is a guide, and we often make interesting side trips while traveling. What a map does do is keep us from getting lost. A map will focus a student writer's attention on the task at hand. The essay map has many other uses as a teaching tool as well. First, it is possible for the student with extreme problems with sequential thinking to outline an essay on the map itself. In short, the map can be used as "hands-on" material. Second, a teacher may break down any assignment into parts without the student losing sight of the essay as a whole. Third, a student can get a good foothold on an essay's design before starting an outline or a rough draft. Once that design is internalized, the student can work out his own map to describe the overall composition to the teacher. In this way, a teacher can more easily keep a finger on the pulse of the writing process. Students can be expected to know what they are doing at a particular point in the development of any essay. All you have to say is, "Draw me a picture."

STUDENT ATTITUDES TOWARD A WRITING CLASS

James W. Ney

Shortly after the beginning of my first freshman class in twenty years, I was approached by the director of the disabled students' office: "We have a deaf student who would like to be in your freshman English class. Would you mind? We have provided a signer to work with her. He will attend class every day, but some instructors find it all a little distracting."

I assured the speaker that my classes tended to be rather unstructured and that an extra person in the front of the class signing would probably not distract me. I was surprised to find out that this student had been turned out of a freshman English class on the grounds that the whole process of signing was too distracting.

In any case, it turned out that the kind of class that was being conducted was very adaptable to the presence of a hearing-disabled student and that the exercises were of particular benefit. That class had started with my announcement, "It has been almost twenty years since I have taught freshman composition."

...IN TWENTY YEARS THE TIDES OF EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE SHIFT AND ...I WAS NOT GOING TO TEACH IN THE MANNER OF MY YOUTH...

Although the statement does have positive truth value, it was not made to inform the students of my age or lack of recent experience in teaching freshman writing but as a formal declaration of the fact that in twenty years the tides of educational practice shift, and I was not going to teach in the manner of my youth. For me, the shift would be built around two current educational precepts: (1) "This new spirit is now expressed in a general phrase: the subordination of teaching to learning" (Gattegno, p. 1), and (2) "...composition teachers aren't proofreaders and shouldn't be" (Knapp, p. 271). The first precept comes from an education psychologist who may simply be making common sense statements without any empirical or theoretical support. The second comes from a teacher-trainer who has suffered in more than one classroom and offers the following justification for his position:

> The value of any new system for teaching or correcting compositions has to be determined in the last analysis by how well it does what we want done, and at what cost. A method that achieves amazing results but demands a half-hour per day per pupil in corrections would have to be reluctantly set aside until we could retire from classroom teaching and tutor in some ignore-the-cost crash program. (Knapp, p. 272)

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Acknowledging the utility of these two precepts, I set about to establish the ground rules for the entire semester with the announcement, "All compositions will be subject to peer evaluation." Such a tactic insured the validity of both general principles in the operation of the class: (1) the teacher would not be merely a proofreader, and (2), in a real sense, teaching would be subordinated to learning since students would have to learn the art of grading written compositions.

To orient students to the labyrinth of peer evaluation, I explained that there would be twelve compositions assigned for the semester. Each composition would be graded by different students selected on a random basis; I as the instructor would grade four compositions for each student during the semester. Since there were twenty-seven students in the class, I would accomplish this feat by grading a maximum of eight compositions per week. Numerical grades were to be used on the following schedule:

student evaluation	10 points
teacher evaluation	10 points
teacher evaluation of student grading	5 points

Thus, for any set of themes, eight themes would have two grades on them—for example, seven from the peer and eight from the instructor--and eight students would receive from 1 to 5 points for their work in the grading of the eight themes that were also graded by the instructor. I assured the students that I would not change the grade awarded one student by another. It seemed that, if grades were changed by the instructor, students would soon feel that their work was of little importance and, in this sense, teaching would not be subordinated to the learning of the students. In any case, as the semester developed, it became apparent that, in 80 percent of the cases, the grades assigned by the students corresponded very closely to the grades assigned by the instructor.

One student expressed extreme displeasure with peer evaluation, complaining that the instructor was the expert and should not trust inexperienced high school graduates with the task of evaluating the themes of college freshmen—she had had a bad experience since one of her compositions, with some justification, had been given a low grade by one of her peers. Other students expressed surprise at the discoveries that they made from the grading process, pointing out that (1) they were learning a lot about writing by grading compositions, and (2) they were learning a lot about the writing of their peers. One student said, "I used to think that *my* writing was terrible until I started reading compositions written by other students." To such statements, the instructor listened without comment, but secretly felt that the confidence thus acquired was of benefit to the student. The one deaf student in the class fit into the overall conduct of the class on these points quite well, although some students had trouble grading her themes since she made low-level errors such as the omission of plural markers and verb terminations. This may have been a result of the fact that her deafness was congenital.

In any case, the development of expertise in theme grading was not left entirely to chance or to the ability of the students to learn by discovery. To strengthen the latent capabilities of the students and to provide them with ever-expanding knowledge to be used in the evaluation and the writing of compositions, whole class hours were devoted to (1) analysis of compositions written by students and (2) discussion of composition handbook sections that dealt with the grading of compositions. Such old adages as *Don't use the passive; it's weak* or *Use concrete nouns and verbs*

were discussed and explored for their strengths or weaknesses. Besides this, the mysteries of dangling modifiers, shifting tenses or pronominal references, and the indefinite *you* or *one--One should not refer to oneself, shouldn't you?*--and other such matters were all revealed through class discussion.

Of even more importance to the subordination of teaching to learning, however, were the sentence-combining exercises. A prepublication copy of *The Writer's Options: Sentence Combining for College Freshmen* arrived just before the semester began. Exercises from this book were duplicated and distributed to the class for completion in class during the first few weeks of the semester. These exercises proved to be the very kind of thing that the one deaf student needed, since they were extremely helpful to her in her attempts to overcome the low-level errors in her compositions.

As the semester progressed and the exercises became more complex, they were given to the students for out-of-class completion. It is perhaps unfortunate that pre- and post-tests were not given to measure the growth in writing ability of the students during the course of the semester. They were not given because of previous experience. As reported in an article titled, "The Hazards of the Course: Sentence Combining in Freshman English," an attempt to use sentence combining for the enhancement of writing ability in freshman English had produced largely negative results. Attitudinal surveys taken in the course of this experiment in 1976 had shown that the students were negatively disposed toward the exercises. Hence, during the semester, two attitudinal surveys were administered to the students. The first of these was administered on September 26, 1978, four weeks after the start of the semester, and the results appear in Table 1.

In the first attitudinal survey, the students seemed to feel that the sentence-combining exercises were a little easy, rating them an average of 2.1 on a 7-point scale. Possibly because of this, they were not sure that the exercises were very valuable or very useful, rating them toward the ameliorative end of the scale, but awfully close to the neutral rating of 4. However, they did not, as a group, feel as positive toward the sentence-combining exercises as they fellt about their lives in Tempe, money, or their mothers. Nevertheless, they evidently harbored no ill will toward the instructor for requiring the exercises--they rated him as positively as they did their mothers, though on a slightly different scale. The attitudinal survey was repeated with some modifications toward the end of the semester, on November 14, 1978, roughly twelve weeks after the semester had begun. The results are shown in Table 2.

On the November attitudinal survey, the students indicated that their attitudes had shifted on the issue of sentence combining. Although they did not feel that the sentence-combining exercises were much more useful, assigning the usefulness of the exercises a 3.6 in September and a 3.5 in November, their feelings about the value of the exercises had changed noticeably, with a score of 3.8 in September and a score of 2.9 in November. Interestingly enough, their attitudes about the value of sentence combining varied inversely with the difficulty that they had with it. It is quite possible that the early sentence-combining exercises in the workbook were not challenging to the students; as they became more difficult, leading the students through the manipulation of sentences to the construction of paragraphs, the students felt that they were of more value. Furthermore, additional attitudes toward sentence combining were solicited in the November survey. This time the students indicated that sentence combining had a good effect on their writing and, to a lesser extent,

Table 1

Attitudinal Survey: Freshman English Sept. 26, 1978

1. Complete the scale after this question, indicating how you feel about the sentence combining exercises that you have completed to date.

easy	:2.1:	:	:	:	:	difficult
useful	:	:3.6:	:	:	:	useless
valuable	:	:3.8:	:	:	:	waste of time

2. Complete the scale indicating how you feel about your mother.

loving	1.5:	:	:	:	:	resentful
warm	1.9:	:	:	:	:	cool
dependent	:	:3.2:	:	:	:	independent

3. Complete the scale indicating how you feel about other students grading your compositions.

good	:2.0:	:	:	:	:	bad
like	:2.3:	:	:	:	:	hate
useful	:2.0:	:	:	:	:	useless

4. Complete the scale indicating how you feel about your life in Tempe.

good	:2.6:	:	:	:	:	bad
like	:2.2:	:	:	:	:	hate
comfortable	:2.5:	:	:	:	:	uncomfortable

5. Complete the scale indicating how you feel about other students grading your compositions.

good	:	:3.9:	:	:	:	bad
like	:	:	:4.1:	:	:	hate
useful	:	:	:4.3:	:	:	useless

6. Complete the scale indicating how you feel about grading another student's composition.

good	:	:3.4:	:	:	:	bad
like	:	:3.1:	:	:	:	hate
useful	:	:3.3:	:	:	:	useless

7. Complete the scale indicating how you feel about the football games at ASU.

good	:2.6:	:	:	:	:	bad
like	:2.4:	:	:	:	:	hate

8. Complete the scale indicating how you feel about the ENG 101 instructor.

good	1.9:	:	:	:	:	bad
like	1.4:	:	:	:	:	hate
hardworking	:2.2:	:	:	:	:	lazy

9. Complete the scale indicating how you feel about money.

good	:2.5:	:	:	:	:	bad
like	1.8:	:	:	:	:	hate
necessary	1.7:	:	:	:	:	unnecessary

Table 2

Attitudinal Survey: Freshman English Nov. 14, 1978

1. Complete the scale indicating how you feel about sentence combining exercises that you have completed to date.

easy	:2.8:	:	:	:	:		difficult
useful	:	:3.5:	:	:	:		useless
valuable	:2.9:	:	:	:	:		waste of time

2. Complete the scale indicating how you feel about your father.

loving	1.8:	:	:	:	:		resentful
warm	1.8:	:	:	:	:		cool
dependent	:	:	:4.3:	:	:		independent

3. Complete the scale indicating how you feel about your studies at ASU.

good	:2.4:	:	:	:	:		bad
like	:2.5:	:	:	:	:		hate
useful	:2.2:	:	:	:	:		useless

4. Complete the scale indicating how you feel about the effect of sentence combining on your writing.

good effect	:2.9:	:	:	:	:		bad effect
helps me build sentences	:	:3.6:	:	:	:		merely gives me an understanding of sentences

5. Complete the scale indicating how you feel about ENG 101.

good	:2.7:	:	:	:	:		bad
like	:2.5:	:	:	:	:		hate
useful	:	:3.0:	:	:	:		useless

6. Complete the scale indicating how you feel about other students grading your compositions.

good	:	:	:4.4:	:	:		bad
like	:	:	:4.3:	:	:		hate
useful	:	:	:4.0:	:	:		useless

7. Complete the scale indicating how you feel about grading other students' compositions.

good	:	:3.8:	:	:	:		bad
like	:2.9:	:	:	:	:		hate
useful	:	:3.6:	:	:	:		useless

8. Complete the scale indicating how you feel about the ENG 101 instructor.

good	1.6:	:	:	:	:		bad

helped them build better sentences. Again, it would appear that no resentment was directed by the students toward the instructor for requiring the sentence-combining exercises, since he received a rating similar to the rating they allowed their fathers--a rating not substantially different from what they accorded their mothers. In any case, the freshman English class received a rating commensurate with the other studies they were taking at the University, although the students were a little less sure of the usefulness of freshman writing compared to other studies (3.0 as compared to 2.2).

Of considerable interest in the attitudinal surveys are the feelings of the students toward peer evaluation. On both the September and the November survey, peer evaluation received the least positive ratings. From a persual of the surveys, it appeared that student attitudes were polarized on the issue of peer evaluation. Some students felt very negative about having peers grade their compositions; other students felt quite positive about the same issue, with the result that the average marking on the surveys drifted toward the neutral position on the scale. Within this general feeling of uneasiness with peer evaluation is another curiosity—these students as a group felt less negative about grading another student's compositions than they did about having one of their peers grade their compositions. I suppose their feelings are quite human; they say, in effect, "I don't mind grading your written composition, but I don't like you grading mine." Although this is true as a rather broad generalization, it is not true for all students, since a perusal of the surveys indicates that students marked this item from either of two extremes—they felt very positive about it or they disliked it intensely. In any case, the two scales are quite far apart, with a difference between 3.1 and 4.1 on the like-hate dimension. These attitudes shifted a little toward the negative end of the scale for having another student grade compositions during the twelve weeks between measurements and a little towards the ameliorative end of the scale for grading another student's composition.

Since all the attitudinal surveys were completed anonymously, it is difficult to say how the deaf student felt about the course in general or the sentence-combining exercises in particular. Conversations through the signer would seem to indicate that her responses were positive, in any case.

One other important aspect of the course was not treated on the attitudinal surveys, but even in this aspect of the course an effort was made to subordinate teaching to learning. During the course of the semester, the students were required to study a text devised for use in a freshman class (D'Angelo, *Process and Thought in Composition*). This text was covered in its entirety, employing many of the exercises as a basis for writing assignments. For instance, when the chapter "Patterns of Thought: Comparison and Analogy" was assigned, students were required to write compositions on any number of exercises included with the chapter, such as the following:

1. Write an essay, using one of the following analogies:
   a. Thinking is like exploring.
   b. Courting is like playing a game.
   c. Life is a river . . .

So that even this would be treated as an exercise in which teaching was subordinated to learning, individual students were required to give short presentations on the basis of information obtained from each chapter of the text. Although a personal invitation was made to the one deaf student in the class to participate in this aspect of

of the course, she refused to give an oral presentation, probably because her speech was hardly intelligible. Without doubt the use of this text also helped create the positive attitudes that the students had toward the course.

From a description, then, of the manner in which one freshman writing class is taught by an instructor who has thought about teaching such a class for twenty years and then has proceeded to do it, these central questions are raised: (1) Can sentence combining be used as an integral part of a freshman composition class without seriously detracting from the more traditional concerns of such a class? (2) Is sentence combining successful when it is used in relatively small doses with a freshman English class? (3) Do sentence-combining exercises help the handicapped, such as the hearing-impaired? The first question can be answered affirmatively with some assurance since one instructor's opinion on the matter should be sufficient to provide such an answer. The second question cannot at this time be answered with much assurance, since in the above-mentioned project pre-tests and post-tests were not administered; neither were subjective evaluations of the student themes. However, evidence from a different sentence-combining project can be brought to bear on the question to provide a tentative answer at least.

In a project involving a freshman writing class for international students, pre-tests and post-tests were administered, together with subjective evaluation of student compositions on a scale of 1 to 10. In this project, limited amounts of sentence-combining practice did in fact foster improvement in the syntactic maturity of the student writing in an experimental group. It also resulted in measurable improvement in the quality of student compositions as measured by a subjective evaluation. Interestingly enough, however, although the syntactic maturity of the control group students in this experiment did not show significant gains in the same fashion as did the experimental group students, yet the quality of the student compositions did. This would seem to indicate that sentence combining is useful for freshmen in a composition class, but it does not indicate that sentence combining is more effective than traditional means of instruction for the improvement of the overall quality of student themes when it is used in limited doses. Daiker et al. have proved that large doses of sentence combining can indeed affect the overall quality of compositions in a freshman class as well as improvement in the syntactic maturity of the writing. They have not shown, however, that small doses of sentence combining will not do the same thing; neither have they shown that large doses of sentence combining are not detrimental to student attitude. Although the present project has not addressed itself to the former issue, it has positively answered the latter. Sentence combining can be used in a freshman English class that induces positive feelings in the class members toward the subject that is being taught. That alone gives assurance of the utility of small doses of sentence combining in a freshman class. Like the second question, the third question can be answered only tentatively. But it can be answered: the one deaf student in the class testified to the usefulness of the sentence-combining exercises as an aid to mastery of written English.

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THE WRITING LAB NEWSLETTER is intended as an informal means of exchanging information among those who work in writing labs and language skills centers. Brief articles describing labs, their instructional materials, goals, programs, budgets, staffing, services, etc., are invited. For those who wish to join the newsletter group, a donation of $3 to help defray duplicating and mailing costs (with checks made payable to the editor) would be appreciated. Please send material for the newsletter and requests to join to:

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ORAL METHODOLOGIES FOR COMPOSITION INSTRUCTION:
A SELECTIVE ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Robert C. Wess

The following annotated bibliography brings together a selected list of books, monographs, and articles that may be useful to the instructor interested in using oral techniques to teach composition. Some of the selections bear the fruit of pure research; others offer classroom methodologies employing oral techniques for teaching composition. While a number of selections focus on theoretical aspects of talking-writing, most of the entries offer practical approaches for applying oral techniques in teaching composition at almost any level.

The thirty-five entries in this collection focus on rhetorical research of the last twenty-five years. Selections were made on the basis of clarity in elucidating the relation between spoken and written language, between oral and scribal pedagogies, or between the goals and values of speaking and writing. I have excluded formal textbooks, unpublished dissertations, book reviews, items on teacher preparation, essays duplicating previous research, and articles either too brief or insufficient to elaborate the oral-scribal connection.

JUST AS THE INTRODUCTION OF WRITING
ALTERED SPEAKING STYLE, TODAY'S NEW
ORALITY WILL TRANSFORM WRITING STYLE.

The range of this bibliography covers the broad area of oral-scribal research theory, presenting methodologies that clarify relations between writing and speaking. It also includes the area of oral-scribal, pre-writing techniques. A third domain spans those oral-scribal methods useful for the writing process itself. Finally, it includes the territory of oral-scribal, post-writing methodologies. For clarity and convenience, the bibliography is organized under these four divisions. Entries relating to more than one division are placed in that category which I have judged to be its primary focus or interest.

I hope this initial bibliography will encourage many teachers to become interested in the possibilities of oral-scribal techniques. Some may add to this present list of resources; others may begin their own talk-write investigation or practice. Many teachers, I hope, in applying these resources to their composition teaching, will find tangible benefits and rewards in learning oral-scribal theory or in teaching the pre-writing, writing, or post-writing states of the writing act itself. Because this list inevitably reflects the limitations of my own reading, biases, and available research

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materials, I welcome comments or suggestions on the bibliography, its annotations, usefulness, or omissions. Please send correspondence to me at P.S.U. Box 135, Pembroke State University, Pembroke, N.C. 28372.

ORAL-SCRIBAL, RESEARCH-THEORY METHODOLOGIES

Baron, Dennis E. "Non-Standard English, Composition, and the Academic Establishment." *College English,* 37 (October, 1975), 176-183.

Reviews research demonstrating the logic of both spoken and written non-standard English. Concludes that teachers should emphasize intelligibility requirements of the written code rather than attack student's use of language.

Blankenship, Jane. "A Linguistic Analysis of Oral and Written Style." *Quarterly Journal of Speech,* 48 (1962), 419-422.

Demonstrates how syntactical structure is determined by an individual's style rather than by read/heard purpose. Suggests that dimensions other than written or oral be sought when discussing style.

DeVito, Joseph A. "Psychogrammatical Factors in Oral and Written Discourse by Skilled Communicators." *Speech Monographs,* 33 (1966), 73-76.

Focuses on stylistic differences between speech and writing rather than on comprehension factors. Finds that oral language contains significantly more self-reference terms, pseudoquantifying terms, "allness" terms, qualification terms, and terms indicative of conscious projection than does written language.

DeVito, Joseph A. "Levels of Abstraction in Spoken and Written Language." *Journal of Communication,* 17 (1967), 354-361.

Analyzes 8000 words of oral and written discourse. Finds oral language to be significantly less abstract: it uses more finite verbs and fewer nouns of abstraction than written language.

Drieman, G. H. J. "Differences Between Written and Spoken Language." *Acta Psychologica,* 10 (1962), 36-57 and 78-100.

Uses descriptive word statistics to compare oral and written language. Finds that written language provides shorter texts and fewer words of one syllable, but it employs long words, more words of more than one syllable, more attributive qualities, and a more varied vocabulary than does oral language. Finds that subjects give much greater care to writing language than to speaking it.

Gibson, James W., Charles R. Gruner, Robert J. Kibler, and Francis J. Kelly. "A Quantitative Examination of Differences and Similarities in Written and Spoken Messages." *Speech Monographs,* 33 (1966), 444-451.

Concludes that spoken language is significantly more readable and more interesting than is written language. Spoken language contains significantly shorter sentences, fewer syllables, and somewhat less diverse vocabularies.

Horowitz, Milton W., and Alan Berkowitz. "Listening and Reading, Speaking and Writing: An Experimental Investigation of Differential Acquisition and Reproduction of Memory." *Perceptual and Motor Skills,* 24 (1967), 207-215.

Characterizes thought processes reproduced through spoken expression as looser, wordier, more repetitive in words used and cognitive content, and producing more additions than those reproduced through written expression.

Horowitz, Milton W. "Writing and Speaking: Two Gateways to the Mind." *Today's Speech*, 12 (1964), 16-18.

Points out biological advantages of speech over writing in terms of mechanical facility, earlier development, and faster feedback. Psychologically, speech is less formal, less permanent, and exacts less commitment than writing. For psychotherapy, speech is more versatile and reveals more of self than writing.

Jovanovich, William. "A Tumult of Talk." *The American Scholar*, 41 (Winter, 1971-72), 40-49.

Sees our culture as predominantly oral and anti-intellectual. Defends individuals' right to speak their own language even while learning to read standard American usage. Opts for deemphasizing the distinction between speech and writing.

Kinneavy, James L., and C. Robert Kline, Jr. "Composition and Related Fields." *Teaching Composition: Ten Bibliographical Essays*. Fort Worth: Texas Christian U. Press, 1976.

Reports the historical dichotomy between speech and rhetoric and the need to link recent developments in speech analysis to written discourse.

Loban, Walter. *Problems in Oral English*. NCTE Research Report Number 5, 1966.

Following earlier thesis that more instruction in oral language enables teacher to teach writing skills more effectively *(The Language of Elementary School Children)*, defines Standard English, suggests reasons for learning it, and discusses minority problem areas in learning it. States that oral drill helps more than workshop drills in overcoming these problems.

"Students' Right to Their Own Language." *College Composition and Communication*, 25 (Fall, 1974), 1-32.

Stresses the need for English teachers to understand and accept dialectal differences in the classroom. Points out the competence of dialect speakers and their writing patterns.

ORAL-SCRIBAL, PRE-WRITING METHODOLOGIES

Collignon, Joseph. "Why Leroy Can't Write." *College English*, 39 (March, 1978), 852-859.

Using arrows to suggest voice inflection, suggests that students practice oral reading exercises in order to hear punctuation points and sentence patterns. From reading aloud well, students transfer the method to their own writing.

Elbow, Peter. *Writing Without Teachers*. New York: Oxford U. Press, 1973.

Stressing the organic approach to writing, discusses the usefulness of talk throughout the writing process, especially in getting started and in concluding.

Emig, Janet. "Writing as a Mode of Learning." *College Composition and Communication*, 28 (May, 1977), 122-127.

Distinguishes between talking and writing (writing is *not* talk recorded). Recognizes the importance of talk as a valuable form of pre-writing.

Haugh, Oscar M. "The English Teacher as Teacher of Speech." *English Journal*, 44 (March, 1955), 205-210.

Emphasizes the importance of teaching speech along with writing in English classes. Provides specific examples for using oral techniques in teaching the written outline and usage skills more effectively.

Hawkins, Thom. *Group Inquiry Techniques for Teaching Writing*. Urbana, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English and ERIC, 1976.

Uses peer-group techniques of oral communication to initiate and follow up writing and learning activities.

Miller, Barbara, and James W. Ney. "The Effect of Systematic Oral Exercises on the Writing of Fourth-Grade Students." *Research in the Teaching of English*, 2 (1969), 44-61.

Uses oral drills of various sentence patterns and choral readings from literary works as part of pre-writing activities by experimental group. Concludes that oral practice positively affects the writing of fourth graders.

Moffett, James. *Teaching the Universe of Discourse*. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1968.

Suggests monologuing as a pre-writing strategy; suggests conversation as a post-writing technique.

Squire, James R., ed. *The Teaching of English*. Chicago: U. of Chicago Press, 1977.

Essays by James Britton and Gordon Brossell emphasize the need for talk in the classroom and its significance for writing.

Wilkinson, Andrew. "The Concept of Oracy." *English Journal*, 59 (January, 1970), 71-77.

Sees the essential process in teaching English as the verbalization of experience, including oracy (speaking and listening skills) and literacy (writing and reading skills).

Zoellner, Robert. "Talk-Write: A Behavioral Pedagogy for Composition." *College English*, 30 (January, 1969), 267-320.

The "visceral blurt" in speaking overcomes the problem that students don't write what they think. Proposes a talk-write model to replace the think-write model now in wide practice.

ORAL-SCRIBAL, WRITING METHODOLOGIES

Anderson, Wallace L. "Recognizing Restrictive Clauses." *College English*, 18 (1975), 269-271.

Uses pitch variation and pausing patterns in speaking to distinguish restrictive from nonrestrictive clauses in writing.

Emig, Janet. *The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders*. Urbana, Illinois: NCTE Research Report Number 13, 1971.

Investigates the writing process through case-study technique. Students compose aloud and write down their ideas simultaneously.

Linn, Michael D. "Black Rhetorical Patterns and the Teaching of Composition." *College Composition and Communication*, 26 (May, 1975), 149-53.

Demonstrates the skillfulness of blacks' use of oral expressions. Provides methods by which composition professors may use this skill in teaching black students composition.

Ong, Walter J., S.J. "Media Transformation: The Talked Book." *College English*, 34 (December, 1972), 405-410.

Points out how "talked books," the new electronic orality, has and will dramatically affect present and future writing. Just as the introduction of writing altered speaking style, today's new orality will transform writing style.

Radcliffe, Terry. "Talk-Write Composition: A Theoretical Model Proposing the Use of Speech to Improve Writing." *Research in the Teaching of English*, 6 (Fall, 1972), 187-199.

Following Zoellner's talk-write model, documents the benefits of speech communication for problem solving. Itemizing the advantages of speech communication over writing, the author hypothesizes that the writing of a talk-writer will be judged of higher quality than that produced by the think-write or the read-write approach.

ORAL-SCRIBAL, POST-WRITING METHODOLOGIES

Anderson, Jean P. "Reading and Writing Can Be Fun for the Underachiever." *English Journal*, 59 (November, 1970), 1119-1121 and 1127.

Describes unit in teaching children's literature to high school students. Involves reading and reviewing children's stories, writing original ones, and reading both types to grade school classes.

Blake, Robert W. "How to Talk to a Writer, or Forward to Fundamentals in Teaching Writing." *English Journal*, 65 (November, 1976), 49-55.

Discusses strategies teachers may use in talking with students about their writing. Gives practical examples for instilling student confidence and facility.

Cooper, Charles R., and Lee Odell. "Considerations of Sound in the Composing Process of Published Writers." *Research in the Teaching of English*, 10 (Fall, 1976), 103-115.

Infers that for some mature competent writers a sense of the oral/aural implications of written language is an important consideration in deciding how to shape certain written texts. Suggests how considerations of sound may help students in making writing decisions.

Macrorie, Ken. *Telling Writing*. Rochelle Park: Hayden Book Co., 1970.

Uses "The Helping Circle," a group-discussion post-writing technique, to evaluate effective student writing.

Moffett, James. *A Student-Centered Language Arts Curriculum, Grades K-13: A Handbook for Teachers*. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1968.

Emphasizes feedback to foster better writing. Uses dictation methods to improve spelling and punctuation.

Nauer, Barbara. "Soundscript: A Way to Help Black Students to Write Standard English." *College English*, 36 (January, 1975), 269-271.

Employs dictation as a post-writing technique. Attempts, through teacher reading and student listening, to correct dialectal errors in spelling, tense, case, and number.

Schultz, John. "The Story Workshop Method: Writing from Start to Finish." *College English*, 39 (December, 1977), 411-436.

Employs several oral techniques—oral word exercises, oral storytelling, oral readings, oral recall—as preliminary to and postscript for in-class and out-of-class writing exercises. Devotes progressively more time to oral presentations of student writing followed by classroom recall exercises.

USING CHORAL READING IN COMPOSITION INSTRUCTION

William H. Cullen

We usually regard choral reading as a literary activity in which people work closely together to express desired effects with language. But group speech activities may also be used to help students in a writing class understand better certain concepts of composition, such as purpose and voice, and the process of composition as a whole: pre-writing, writing, editing, and proofreading. In addition, the basic skills of selection, organization, and apportionment of materials and the effective use of language may be exemplified. In brief, choral reading motivates a group of students to "get it all together" in terms of practicing and appreciating the concepts and skills of composition.

If a class is unfamiliar with choral reading techniques, a teacher may quickly and pleasurably introduce the students to the activity with verses learned by rote methods. Almost always, rhythmic folk songs (spoken, of course, not sung) and short lyric poems are suitable. There are dozens of examples of haiku and the like for all grade levels. I have made frequent use of "The Zulu Warrior," once made popular by the Kingston Trio. I follow that selection with a mountain folk song, "Pretty Little Blackeyed Suzy," and then we do Carl Sandburg's "Fog." All of these selections are quickly learned without the use of printed materials. The important point to remember is to begin with short entertaining selections that quickly impart the idea of using our voices to appreciate the effects of selections of prose and poetry.

> ...ACTIVITIES COMBINING THE WRITTEN AND SPOKEN FORMS OF LANGUAGE MAY IMPRESS UPON STUDENTS THE PHASES, THE SKILLS, AND THE UNDERSTANDINGS OF COMPOSITION.

When the students seem ready to practice writing and speaking their own works, they might begin by creating impressions of a scene well-known to them. On the chalkboard write "McDonalds," or "Kiwanis Park" (or whatever place name is locally appropriate), or "the bus ramp at closing time." Next, ask the students to contribute words and phrases suggesting the nature of the scene and situation, calling upon their senses of sight, sound, smell, touch, and taste to create vivid impressions. This image gathering is comparable to the so-called pre-writing process.

After a dozen to twenty phrases have been volunteered, the class cooperatively selects items from the list to create a particular emphasis about the scene--its atmosphere of organized confusion, or its peace and beauty, or its contrasts of colors and

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noises. Next, the students organize the selected items in a sensible way, adding necessary connecting words and further impressions as these may occur to someone. The goal is to achieve a unified, coherent free verse impression of a scene.

The class will find that for one or another impression, a particular arrangement of the details is preferable. Sometimes a spatial, or a chronological, or a climactic sequence is best, depending upon the effect being sought. My students have found that sometimes a certain word or phrase is worth repeating as a refrain. Such repetition serves to emphasize a particular effect.

When the first draft seems finished, the results are checked by the class to make certain that there is a definite idea presented by the poem. At this point, the "writing process" and the "editing process" are being experienced. It remains for the students to check the mechanics of spelling, punctuation, phrasing, and so on so that a reader unfamiliar with the poem may read it easily. Thus the "proofreading process" is practiced.

The conclusion of this activity is a choral reading by members of the class in which combinations of voices using various vocal dynamics are employed to carry out the intended effect of the work. The concept of *tone* or *point of view* or *voice* is being made plain as the students seek to express vocally the nature of their subject.

To follow up this introductory whole-group activity, the class may be divided into small groups, each to write and choral-read its own impression of a familiar place. Each group should be supplied with sheets of newsprint, felt-tip markers, and a work area.

There are other writing activities in which choral reading may combine with the composing process to help strengthen writing skills. The following is a variation on a suggestion found in Floyd L. Bergman's *The English Teacher's Activities Handbook*.

The teacher writes the name of a color on the chalkboard. The students respond to that word with an associated word or phrase. To that response the teacher contributes a word or phrase. Then it's the students' turn again, and so on. The process continues until about ten to twelve items have been listed. The composing process consists of organizing selected items from the lists of terms into an impressionistic verse bearing the color (the original word) as its title. During the writing phase of the activity, care should be taken to achieve an emphasis on a desired mood. This will be accomplished through the conscious selection, arrangement, and apportionment of terms. Probably some filler words and transition terms will need to be added. And, as always during the whole composing process, additional ideas may be included as the composition grows.

Here is the product of one group of students:

(leader)	(group)
yellow	buttercups
fields and fences	hay
sunlight glancing	shadows dancing
children searching	grasshoppers
redwinged blackbirds	dandelion fluff
fairy sailboats	swaying hay
secret hideaways	field mice

These thoughts led the group to write this poem:

YELLOW

On long yellow summer days,
straight-limbed fences hem in
dancing buttercups and swaying hay.

Mice and grasshoppers flee into
shadowy hideaways from children
pursuing airy sailboats of
dandelion fluff.

The whole process of composition is summarized here. There is the pre-writing phase of gathering ideas and organizing them, the phases of writing and editing, and finally the proofreading phase.

The Poetry Kit, published by Scholastic Magazines, Inc., suggests several writing activities that can be used with choral reading experiences too. One of them makes use of "starter phrases."

Pick an interesting word that will "hold the poem together." Examples would be a provocative color, the name of a familiar place or community, a sensory word like "Heard..," or the phrase "I remember...." Next, list the word or phrase a half-dozen times in a vertical row on the chalkboard. The phrase now becomes the starter for a series of impressions contributed by the students. For example:

Purple--glowering moun ains ruling the valleys.
Purple--lilacs and iris announcing summer.
Purple--vampire eye-shadow on my older sister.
Purple--plum juice running down my chin.

Notwithstanding the purplish hue of the example, it represents an opportunity for the class to exercise their skills of selection of sensory detail and organization to create an effect. During the editing process, questions regarding "overwriting" may be brought up and acted upon.

In a choral reading of a similarly created selection, a single voice can state and stress the thematic term in appropriate tones. Groups of voices or solo voices can express the complementary phrases.

Judith Kahn in *The Guide to Conscious Communication* describes a writing exercise that relies on synesthesia, the process of combining at least two senses to create an image. Kahn's model is from Basho:

As bell tones fade
Blossom scents take up the ringing:
Evening shade!

The teacher should lead the students to see that at least three physical senses are exercised in this verse. Warm the students up to writing this kind of haiku with

brief associations of sounds and smells, or colors and tactile impressions. (Red is hot; blue is cold; hot water is heavy; the horn blast of a sports car is shrill yellow, and so on.) The students next try to add to suggested phrases to produce a synesthetic verse: "The evening whispered..," "Moonlight is cold to taste..," "The locust's sharpened saw...." Eventually, small groups of students may profitably work together to produce their own poems for the whole class to listen to, such as:

> Cold to our taste is
> the nearby moonlight; warm are
> the distant mountains.

Here is a final suggestion for a composition and choral reading activity, a bit messy perhaps, but fun. First collect old newspapers until you have at least two issues for each student. On the day you wish to try this activity, also have available a half-dozen pairs of scissors, a supply of paste or transparent tape, and several large sheets of plain newsprint.

Before distributing the materials to the students, ask the class to contribute expressions that seem to suggest the feelings of people today about life, or about their jobs, or their other activities. Words like "Yuk!" "Zowie!" "Hot-diggity-dog!" or "Yeccchhh" come to mind. List about six to eight such terms. Now explain to the students that by working in small groups and using one of the contributed expressions as a title, they will "make" poems by using words and phrases torn from the newspapers to carry out the impression implied by the title word. Tell the students to pore through the newspapers, selecting and tearing out appropriate large-print words and phrases from headlines and advertisements. About 15 minutes of searching should produce an adequate collection of material to work with.

The next step is to sort out the items according to the contribution any of them makes to achieving the attitude expressed in the title word. Arrange these selected terms so there is a beginning, a middle, and an end. Probably there will be a noticeable climactic arrangement in the final composition.

On a sheet of newsprint tape or paste the selected items according to the agreed-upon arrangement. At the top of the sheet print in large letters the title of the impression.

These "verses," if they may be called that, may be read by their authors, who will attempt to express with their voices the attitude implicit in their compositions.

Thus it is that these activities, combining the written and spoken forms of language, may impress upon students the phases, the skills, and the understandings of composition. A decidedly noticeable benefit of these group activities is that the students may learn from each other in a nonthreatening situation.

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WRITING CREATIVITY AND STYLE HIGHLIGHTED IN NEW INSTRUCTIONAL VIDEO SERIES

Make room at the top, Mr. Cronkite. Here comes R. B. Bugg.

R. B., a foot-high fellow of indeterminately buggish extraction, is the enterprising young TV reporter in a new classroom series called "The Write Channel." The fifteen 15-minute color programs for third and fourth graders help teach writing through the sentence-combining techniques developed by Dr. Frank O'Hare. The series is designed to help children become more confident and prolific writers.

Produced by the Mississippi Authority for Educational Television, the series is available from the Agency for Instructional Television, Box A, Bloomington, IN 47402. Each 15-minute program can be purchased on ½" or 3/4" video cassette for $110. For further information, contact Silvia Straub or Ann Conway, Agency for Instructional Television, 812/339-2203.

A WAY OF LOOKING AT VOICE AND AUDIENCE IN STUDENT WRITING

Tom Reigstad

A short while ago, after rereading Walker Gibson's *Persona--A Style Study for Readers and Writers* (Random House, 1969) and James Mellon's *National Assessment and the Teaching of English* (NCTE, 1975), the importance of carefully formulated writing tasks was reaffirmed for me. By specifying a clear, full rhetorical context that includes audience, voice, and purpose (Gibson calls his triad "Voice," "audience," and "subject"; Mellon refers to "purpose," "mode of discourse," "voice," and "audience") in the tasks that we compose, we not only give students more direction and material to write on, but we build in some categories or common features to look at when evaluating the quality of student responses to the task.

> MARY AND JERRI APPEARED TO BE MAKING SEVERAL ASSUMPTIONS: THAT THE YOUTHFUL MUSIC MARKET IS ATTRACTED TO CATCHY, SLICK AD SLOGANS...THAT MIDDLE-AGED MUSIC LOVERS CAN BE REACHED BY SIMPLE, DIRECT STATEMENTS....

With a sense of "full rhetorical context" in mind, I devised a brief assignment that required adopting two different *personae* (voices) and appealing to two different audiences, and asked two students to complete the task. Then I studied their written responses for word choice and use of intellectual strategies—contrast, temporal sequence, physical context, and change—as defined by Lee Odell in *Evaluating Writing* (NCTE, 1977).

The directions for my Persona/Audience writing task are as follows: (1) You are a representative of a record publishing company. Your responsibility for a newly released album is to promote it by means of jacket (or liner) notes. The recording is by a popular rock group that is "glittery" and that appeals to the "teenie-bopper" market. (2) You have the same duty to write promotional record jacket (or liner) notes to a new album--this time, recorded by a middle-aged singer or group, such as Jerry Vale or Lawrence Welk.

Both students were adopting the persona of a record promoter who must deal with two separate audiences: the 12-15 year old set, and middle-aged music lovers. Before launching into the actual writing, I talked with each student about deciding on an artist or group who would represent the musical taste of each audience, and then about reflecting upon values, vocabulary, life style, and so on of the respective audiences. In

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analyzing the pieces of writing produced by both students, I found that, even though the students did not work together (I elicited their responses on separate occasions), they shared several basic notions of what would likely appeal to their audiences. They especially employed word choice and intellectual strategies in ways that make a comparison of their responses meaningful.

The first student, Mary, a college sophomore, identified the "teenie-bopper" audience in her pre-writing talk with me: "My little sister's that age. If you tell them something's 'in,' they'll do it at that age. If you used words like 'far out' and 'groovy,' they'd probably like it." She chose to promote an album by the Osmond Brothers:

> Here are Donny and the boys at their newest and best—hear them boppin- and stompin', bumpin' and groovin' to their latest tunes. Do all the latest moves to their wild new sound, and if the music moves you, make up some of our own.

Mary selected words that would be attractive to and understood by an early teenage audience (like her sister). She uses action terms to describe the sense of motion present in the Osmonds' music. Furthermore, these action terms are "hip" phrases that are part of a teenager's daily speech, which refer to specific current dance "steps" and to body motion in general inspired by music: "boppin'," "stompin'," "bumpin'," and "groovin'." The visual appeal of these terms was important for Mary, as well. In our post-writing discussion, she explained that kids would be attracted to misspellings or shortened, conversational words: "They never put 'g's' on the end of 'ing' words. It's cool, I guess." Also part of Mary's word scheme to write to a teenie-bopper audience is the use of catchy repetition and punning. She mimics the slick sort of ad writing for teenagers that repeats certain words in slightly different contexts, as in here/hear and moves/moves: "Here are Donny and the boys...hear them boppin'" and "Do all the latest moves...and if the music moves you...." Finally, the words chosen to describe the music performed by the Osmonds are typical of teenagers. Rather than songs, the Osmonds produce "tunes"; their music consists of a "wild new sound."

The intellectual strategies in this piece are carefully designed to appeal to a young audience. By using temporal sequence, Mary firmly points the appeal to the "here and now," to the fast-moving, contemporary, ephemeral teenage pop rock scene. The emphasis is placed on the fact that this is the Osmonds' "newest" album, with their "latest" tunes, consisting of a wild *new* sound." She is classifying her audience by assuming that the Osmond Brothers group provides a good sample of teenage taste, and in another sense of contrast, she rates this album as their "best." In addition, there is an implicit sense of change that will occur to young listeners of this record--that, as soon as the album is played, kids will be inspired to move, to dance, to bop, to stomp.

In sharp contrast to the first piece of writing for teenagers, the audience that Mary envisioned for the second part of the assignment required, in her eyes, a different set of terms and their own version of intellectual strategies in order to be drawn to the album. For a middle-aged music audience, Mary decided to promote an Andy Williams record album:

> This is one for your collection. Listen as Any does all the old favorites plus several new ones that will undoubtedly become new favorites. Accompanied by the Pendleton Philharmonic, the music is really music to your ears, a pleasure to listen to, an album to treasure.

Instead of being stocked with catchy, "hip" phrases and attention-getting repetition and puns, the words contribute to direct, simply expressed sentences. The music on this Andy Williams album is "really music," not some simple "tune"; this music is "a pleasure to listen to," not a "wild new sound." The middle-aged listener can be further assured that this music is not "wild," because Andy is accompanied by a Philharmonic orchestra. By simply being asked to "listen," rather than to "dance," there is a static, easy-chair, relaxed quality ascribed to the preferences of this audience.

One can picture adults nodding their heads knowingly when they read the phrase, "the music is really music." In other words, the music on this Andy Williams album consists largely of "old favorites" that have withstood the test of time, in implicit contrast to "kids' music of today." This sense of contrast is reinforced by another intellectual strategy, temporal sequence. The sense of time given is one of permanency in the songs performed by Andy. Listeners of this album will not be concerned with the current pop "Top 40" charts. They are more interested in a "collection of old favorites," in maintaining a "treasure" of music. Even the new songs on this album will endure to become "new favorites." In addition to the strategies of contrast and time, Mary makes use of classification in this piece for middle-aged music lovers. In choosing Andy Williams as typical of their taste, she is identifying this audience as being over 40 or so in age, as being appreciative of family (people used to associate Andy with his annual Christmas Family TV special), and so on. She also classifies this audience as one that enjoys "good" music as performed by a Philharmonic orchestra, and as an audience that *listens* passively to music rather than feeling compelled to jump around.

Jerri, a high school senior, approached the Persona/Audience writing task in a manner similar to Mary's. She geared her record blurbs toward the same kinds of appeal for the respective audiences. Out of countless "teenie-bopper"-oriented groups to choose from, Jerri, too, picked the Osmond Brothers (and sister Marie) as most representative of her youthful audience's tastes:

> Take five and listen to the jive of the Osmond Brothers! Tune in to Donny and Marie as they belt out their newest hit "Leaving It All Up to You."

Jerri's word choice reflects her awareness that hip, catchy, even rhyming words and phrases are attractive to teen readers. She uses the teenage colloquialisms "take five," "listen to the jive," and "tune in" and attention-capturing rhyme (five/jive). Also, she describes the Osmonds' singing as "belting out," which carries with it the senses of enthusiasm, volume, and noise. Jerri emphasizes the present time by citing the Osmonds' "newest hit." She also uses the intellectual strategy "change" purposefully—if the listener "takes five," *i.e.*, takes times out from his present affairs, to listen to the album, he will be altering his current situation for the better.

For the second audience, Jerri's word choice intentionally aims for staid, middle-aged adults. She appeals to that audience's desires to hear peaceful music, by describing Lawrence Welk's music as "relaxing" and soothing." The term "ball room" seems to pinpoint an over-40 audience, since it connotes "big band" dancing, rather than a teenager's "hangout" or discotheque. Also, there is something of a dignified, symphonic quality lent to Welk's music with the terms "overture" and "conducted by":

> Relax while listening to the soothing overtures conducted by Lawrence Welk. Turn your living room into a ball room.

Jerri makes use of the intellectual strategies of change, physical context, and classification in making her pitch toward the middle-aged audience. She implores these adults to change their living room around (figuratively), to transform it into a sort of ball room by listening to Welk's record. The physical context is clear and appealing—that within the comfort of your own living room, you can hear the soothing strains of Lawrence Welk. Finally, in choosing Lawrence Welk as indicative of her second audience's taste in music, she is classifying them as being at least middle-aged.

I believe that both student writers were successful in identifying pertinent traits of the two audiences and in writing with those traits in mind. In selecting certain words and by shaping intellectual strategies to fit the tastes and styles of the audiences, Mary and Jerri appeared to be making several assumptions in common: that the youthful music market is attracted to catchy, slick ad slogans, that teenagers are impressed by current, temporary hit tunes, and that the music that is best is that which gets them actively involved; that middle-aged music lovers can be reached by simple, direct statements that evoke static, relaxing, easy listening, and that they are concerned with a tradition of familiar songs. The writing that both students did for their audiences is reminiscent of the fast-talking, cliché-prone, disc-jockey lingo uttered by a wildly gesticulating Wolfman Jack for teenagers who tune in to TV's "In Concert," as opposed to the TV commercial delivered in a slow, sleepy speech by Hoagy Carmichael for a double album of "all the old hits" ("Misty," "Stardust," and the like), as he sits at a piano with his legs casually crossed.

CALL FOR MANUSCRIPTS

The Committee on Classroom Practices in Teaching English invites educators at all levels—elementary, secondary, and college—to submit manuscripts for the 1980 Classroom Practices publication, which will focus on the theme "Dealing with Differences in the English Classroom." Articles should describe in detail a single lesson, method, or strategy for building the English competence of students in the regular classroom who are physically, emotionally, or mentally handicapped, who are non-native speakers of English, who speak a nonstandard dialect, who are gifted and talented, or who are nontraditional students. Manuscripts can range in length from two to ten pages. Two copies should be submitted, with the author's name and address appearing only on a title page attached to the front of each copy. Manuscripts should be mailed before April 15, 1980, to the committee chair, Dr. Gene Stanford, Director, Child Life and Education, Children's Hospital, 219 Bryant Street, Buffalo, New York 14222.

WOOLF'S A ROOM OF ONE'S OWN: DIET FOR STUDENTS IN INTERMEDIATE AND ADVANCED EXPOSITORY WRITING COURSES

Marco A. Portales

The standard fare in an introductory English composition course frequently includes Swift's "A Modest Proposal," Orwell's "Politics and the English Language," perhaps Milton's "Areopagitica," and certainly Thoreau's *Walden* and/or "Civil Disobedience." For intermediate or advanced composition courses, on the other hand, there is no commonly accepted repast, no special essays or books which English composition instructors tend to turn to in the ever-present struggle to help our students improve their writing. Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own,* I would like to suggest, is among the best books for students who have survived the travail of Freshman Composition and remain interested in learning the finer points of writing. More than any other work in the English language, this little book, I have lately discovered, is directly concerned with showing *how* one can and might write.

In marked contrast to introductory composition courses, intermediate and advanced expository writing classes tend to be happier, less enervating experiences. Whereas Freshman Composition is frequently endured by students forced to meet university or departmental requirements, students in the upper-level exposition courses generally enroll of their own volition. If not by choice, most of these latter students, at any rate, take such writing courses because they have seen or sensed that much of their success in academia and later depends on their ability to write well. This fact alone, as many instructors know, improves the air we tend to encounter in the introductory writing class. Instead of facing a reluctant or sometimes unfortunately even hostile group of students who would rather be elsewhere than learning the mechanics of writing, intermediate and advanced composition instructors are aware that such students feel their writing needs improvement and, more encouraging, they are willing to work to bring this betterment about.

WOOLF WILL CAPITALIZE ON AN IMPORTANT STEP WE ALL GO THROUGH IN WRITING, BUT A STEP SELDOM, IF EVER, DEVELOPED IN THE ACTUAL WRITING WE DO.

In selecting reading and writing material that will *dramatize* the more subtle ways through which sophisticated writers convey their ideas, conscientious writing instructors, I believe, cannot do better than to turn to Virginia Woolf's extended essay. Every instructor and group of students will certainly want to point to different aspects in *A Room of One's Own,* but there are several excellent opportunities to teach the art and strategies of fine writing that warrant particular attention.

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A Room of One's Own is extremely self-conscious about *how* one can and might write: in starting her essay Virginia Woolf reminds us or awakens us to the fact that writing on any subject can be effected in an endless number of ways. Invited to give a talk at a college for women on "women and fiction," Woolf begins by listing several of the possibilities the subject suggests to her:

> The title women and fiction might mean, and you may have meant it to mean, women and what they are like; or it might mean women and the fiction that they write; or it might mean women and the fiction written about them; or it might mean that somehow all three are inextricably mixed together and you want to me consider them in that light.

Once expressed, the fourth alternative, indeed, does seem "the most interesting" subject, since, of course, this topic brings together the other three issues. Humbly disclaiming that she "should never be able to come to a conclusion" were she to consider her subject in this last way, Woolf nonetheless succeeds not only in trenchantly detailing each of the issues that suggests themselves but in brilliantly supporting her "opinion" about women, money, and a private writing room. And having stated her view--a thesis interestingly announced--Woolf immediately proceeds to demonstrate that writing well is a matter of using the right strategies to shape the response a writer seeks to elicit. The point, students will see and appreciate, is that in presenting merely "an opinion," Woolf's rhetorical strategy keeps her from casting herself as an authority--a stance she apparently prefers not to embrace, suspecting perhaps that the role is palatably unattractive, that such a representation might set her apart instead of drawing her closer to her audience.

Woolf's audience, needless to say, is most important, for the manner in which she expresses herself is definitely intended to show her near-solicitous consideration for her readers' best regards. Writing instructors may certainly want to devote considerable time to studying the ways in which Virginia Woolf displays her consideration for her audience, and the endeavor, I believe, will be invariably profitable.

Confessing an inability to fulfill what she understands is "the first duty of a lecturer," which is "to hand you after an hour's discourse a nugget of pure truth to wrap up between the pages of your notebooks and keep on the mantelpiece for ever"--a goal she nevertheless achieves--Woolf says she will instead *show* us how she arrived at the view she holds that "a woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction":

> I have shirked the duty of coming to a conclusion upon these two questions--women and fiction remain, so far as I am concerned, unsolved problems. But in order to make some amends I am going to do what I can to show you how I arrived at this opinion about the room and the money. *I am going to develop in your presence as fully and freely as I can the train of thought which led me to think this.*

I do not think there is a more deliberately expressed idea in Woolf's essay than the sentence I have italicized. Aside from telling us how she intends to proceed, Woolf will capitalize on an important step we all go through in writing, but a step seldom, if ever, developed in the actual writing we do. The advantage of this approach is a gain in immediacy between Woolf and her readers: in effect, she will relive her mental experiences so that, readers alongside, her views will be dramatized especially for us.

Much of *A Room of One's Own*, then, is a guided tour of Woolf's mind written exclusively for her readers. The endeavor brings out into the open many behind-the-scenes processes that most writers go through in writing, but the unveiling of these mental processes, as Woolf lucidly places them before her readers, is a revelation in expository writing unparalleled in English language prose. This very disclosure, I believe, is the main feature that makes this book an especially rich text from which to teach composition, for a careful chapter-by-chapter analysis of the techniques Woolf uses to exert control over her ostensibly unwieldy subject can go a long way to help students see how they can structure and compose their own papers.

So far I have dealt with more general aspects in Woolf's little volume, but there are a number of specific elements an instructor might want to call to students' attention. Prospective writers, for instance, might learn how to arrange the paragraphs in their papers by studying the ways in which Woolf has her chapters build on each other. Chapter Three, an instructor can note, ends with this sentence?

> If ever a mind was incandescent, unimpeded, I thought, turning again to the bookcase, it was Shakespeare's mind.

Instead of reiterating anew what has just been said (as I think many students and lesser writers would do), Woolf simply begins Chapter Four by capitalizing on the second demonstrative "that" to make her point beautifully:

> That one would find any woman in that state of mind in the sixteenth century was obviously impossible.

Since finding appropriate titles for their own papers is a problem to which students seldom give more than a moment's notice, writing instructors might advise their students to title each of the separate six chapters that Woolf left untitled. This is a very useful exercise, for it forces students to condense the subject matter of each chapter into a phrase describing the chapter's main concern, and this conditioning will hopefully manifest itself in the titles students will devise for their own papers.

Writers confident of their skills, Woolf shows us, will take risks that lesser writers dare not attempt. In inventing a hypothetical sister for Shakespeare, for instance, Woolf runs the risk of offending the reader's sensibilities; but, having shown us the scarcity of evidence on women during Shakespeare's day, and explaining that she takes this liberty only because "facts are hard to come by," she successfully stymies objections. Instead we are made, I feel right in saying, to withhold judgment; we are made to wait and see if Woolf will carry off her little gamble. And, of course, she does, but what is particularly pleasing to see is that this very invention, which initially threatened to repel or displease us, is brilliantly employed again at the end of the book to help Woolf exhort her audience without being stuffy like many of her stentorian male counterparts.

Aside from the aspects I have briefly described, there are a number of other points that an English writing instructor can profitably call to the attention of his students. Some of the better known sections where attention is generally focused, for example, are the passages where Woolf contrasts Oxbridge to Fernham, the man's world to the woman's milieu down through the centuries, and, of course, Woolf's synthesis (taken, I suspect, from Aristophanes' story in Plato's *Symposium*) ending with the androgynous mind to which writers of both sexes should aspire. Less known but

pedagogically as rewarding might be: (1) a comparison of the foods served at Oxbridge with the dinner at Fernham, and the ideas suggested by the different victuals; (2) Woolf's excellent but brief analyses of Aphra Behn, Charlotte Bronte, and Jane Austen; and (3) the sensitive, stethoscopical analysis of the hypothetical Mary Carmichael's *Life's Adventure,* which shows us, among other matters, how we might read better.

What I particularly seek to impress upon students when teaching Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* is the feeling that there is a certain seeming inevitability about what Woolf says and how she expresses herself. This, certainly, is Woolf's style, her own literary voice; and students who see this after studying her writing closely are frequently left awed at the way she can virtually do what she pleases with the English language. This realization, I believe, is one of the more useful discoveries a writing student can make, for once a prospective writer learns that he can control his medium, that is, make language serve his ends, then he should be in a position to master writing sometime shortly thereafter--provided, of course, the student keeps writing and writing and writing.

ASSOCIATION FOR TEACHERS OF ADVANCED COMPOSITION

CALL FOR MEMBERS

The newly formed Association for Teachers of Advanced Composition, a special interest group of CCCC, is looking for members who are interested in furthering dialogue among members of the profession who teach writing beyond the college freshman level.

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Professor Rita Sturm
Department of English
University of Albuquerque
Coors Boulevard, N.W.
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87140

A newsletter on pedagogy, research, and theory in advanced composition is planned. Short (3-4 typed pages) manuscripts may be sent to:

Professor Tim Lally
Department of English
Bowling Green State University
Bowling Green, Ohio 43402

ONE HEN, TWO DUCKS, THREE SQUAWKING GEESE:
AN ACCRETIVE APPROACH TO FRESHMAN COMPOSITION

Frances B. Emerson

I would like to present an accretive approach to Freshman Composition that is a departure from the traditional readings/writings courses we generally offer. I have labeled the approach *accretive* because its emphasis is on growth toward a cohesive, whole understanding of the writing process. The course I am describing is designed for the average incoming freshman. It has been developed as only one of several courses in a writing skills program that also includes a remediation center and a series of advanced expository writing courses. The course sets as its goal the equipping of students with the ability to choose appropriate rhetorical structures and effective devices within given situations. It addresses its level to the rhetorical level of the students and progresses in small logically related increments until the final goal. Thus, the course combines the recognized desire for standards and defined goals with an ability to address the specific needs of the student in a pragmatic way.

I would like to sketch a general picture of the course and then go back and elaborate upon a few of its significant features. The course model assumes the existence of a homogeneous class of students. Its members are exposed to extensive writing

THE CONTINUAL EQUIPPING OF STUDENTS TO PERFORM PROGRESSIVELY MORE SOPHISTICATED ASSIGNMENTS BUILDS THEIR CONFIDENCE.

practice in rhetorical principles, techniques, and strategies. The course's structure allows the material to develop logically, be reinforced constantly, and become increasingly more sophisticated. Class discussion and assignments lead the student naturally along a continuum toward a whole. Assignments always provide specific guidelines and goals. Each assignment encompasses all previously practiced skills, thereby reinforcing them. Each allows the student to isolate the element being emphasized at the time, and leads him inductively to the next subject of discussion. Hence, the rules, conventions, and rhetorical strategies of the course are reinforced by the experience and practice of the student rather than simply by the authority of the instructor. As the writer becomes more proficient, and is more likely to succeed, the grade emphasis increases. Therefore, the student's final level of writing ability is accurately reflected in the semester grade. This course does not rely upon a grammar or readings text, but

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rather upon a resource file of both strong and weak student example, instructor contributions, and current media presentations. These peer examples and contemporary applications of rhetorical notions (such as found in *Newsweek, Atlantic Monthly,* or *Punch)* present the student with an unintimidating learning environment. The end-product of this approach to freshman composition is a class of students who are able to seek, test, and select the rhetorical structures and principles appropriate to a given occasion. Each student will gain confidence in his writing ability and progress noticeably.

Before I elaborate upon several aspects of this overview, I would like to note that this approach is flexible and adaptable to most college terms. I developed a forty-session plan that works for me and my students, but it can be lengthened or shortened as the situation demands.

First, to ensure a homogeneous class, ACT scores are used as a registration filter. Students below a certain level are routed to the remediation center, while students with very high scores are enrolled in the advanced courses. Further weeding out is performed during the first two days of class when the students take a one-hour objective test and write a diagnostic essay. By the third class period, the membership is stabilized and homogeneous.

This diagnostic essay assigned during the second class allows the students to seriously undertake a piece of writing and, more important, allows the instructor to determine the general weaknesses and strengths of the particular class. The assignment is representative of the sorts the student can expect during the semester. The required task is carefully delineated so that each student can accomplish it. Its level of difficulty is one that allows each student to perform to the best of his ability. A sample assignment asks the student to imagine the EPA has selected him to evaluate a product. The student can choose any product, real or imagined, and analyze it according to its construction, durability, effectiveness, value, convenience, and so on. Most students appreciate the opportunity to be imaginative and come up with sound analyses of miraculous products. Others simply look around the classroom and pounce upon a venetian blind or combination lock briefcase to critique. But each student is capable of choosing and evaluating a product according to the specific guidelines.

The first unit of the course is short and is a direct result of the diagnostic essay. The pattern of interdependence of material and of constant growth is here established for the entire course. Common usage problems evidenced in the diagnostic essays are taken up in this first unit. The usage problems are introduced within a rhetorical, or purpose/effect, context. The investigative mood of the course is set: by using problems that occurred in the diagnostic essays, the review unit is tailored to meet the needs of the particular class. So for instance, if you are fortunate enough to have a class that does *not* create dangling modifiers, there is no reason to cover the matter in review. The introduction of any undemonstrated weaknesses (of the sort you might find in a grammar review text) may tempt the student to incorporate the error into his repertoire of weaknesses. Tailoring eliminates this temptation.

All the exercises in this review unit should be typed up by the instructor verbatim from the essays. The students are able to see their own sentences and paragraphs presented anonymously and begin to have a personal stake in the revision process. Without the pain of embarrassment, they see how their messages are misunderstood by their peers, and together the students explore alternatives. Thus within this unit, the students also become used to working with one another.

Weaknesses are discussed in terms of emphasis, clarity, appropriateness, and conciseness. As these purpose/effect notions are introduced, the groundwork for the next unit of study is being laid. The student is inductively realizing that purpose and effect are intrinsically related to the writer's awareness of his role, topic, and audience. Since the student begins to think in terms of role and audience at this point, it is very easy to move on to these subjects immediately following the review. For those students who still demonstrate usage weaknesses, the remediation center can conduct tutoring to complement the student's needs while he remains enrolled in the freshman composition course.

In the second unit of the course, the student practices with isolated exercises that reveal the interdependent nature of audience, role, and topic. He might first be called upon to make an extensive list of all the roles he feels are applicable to him as a writer (e.g., friend, brother, student, sports enthusiast, television viewer, and so on). This list would count as a single, minimally weighted assignment. Its purpose is to get the student to realize the differing roles he does play in life, and consequently may function in as writer. Instructors may reasonably expect each student to list at least twenty roles.

At this point, the student is receptive to a formal discussion of the notion of audience. After such discussion and exposure to samples of similar messages geared to different audiences, the student is equipped to handle an assignment that will reinforce his usage review and apply his information on role and audience. One such assignment asks the student to write two brief letters--a first to Jimmy Carter and a second to Gerald Ford. The student is to choose an appropriate role and tell the audience his views on a topic such as amnesty for draft evaders, capital punishment, or price controls. The student must maintain a consistent opinion even though his audiences' opinions differ. Hence the student is required to adopt a role, address a specific audience, deal with a defined topic, and express himself in an intelligent manner. He gets a chance to practice with changes in expression that reflect the nature of his audience even though the message remains basically the same. Inductively, he begins to recognize that only certain topics are appropriate to given audiences--he would not want to address these two presidents on methods of spreading lawn fertilizer, for instance, but his neighbor might be interested in such a topic. As in all assignments, there is this inductive phase that links the material to the next logical element--in this case, topic.

These three subjects--role, audience, and topic--lead naturally to discussions of thesis, methods of substantiating ideas, and tone. After such class sessions and writing practice assignments, the student is ready for his first major rhetorical principle, classification. He has already been grouping related information, but now he will learn that the principle is called *classification*, and he will be equipped to classify consistently. This principle is introduced as a basic component of all logical, cohesive writing. The student reads peer examples of well-written and weak classification essays. He develops an ability to discriminate between information that is intrinsically related and that which is not. A sample classification essay assignment might ask the student to consider the differences between his values and those of his parents. The instructor can reasonably expect the student to classify ideas into categories such as social, political, economic, educational, and religious. After writing the essay, the student is experienced enough to feel confident applying the principle of classification in all subsequent writing.

This interdependence of information and constant reinforcement of skills exists throughout the course. For instance, the graded and returned classification essays serve as an exercise text in paragraph development and methods of paragraph amplification. Somewhat later in the course, the discussion of rhetorical logic leads to considerations of paragraph arrangement, emphasis of information through order, levels of detail, types of conclusions, and the rhetorical principle of cause and effect. Still later in the semester, the comparison/contrast essay is introduced. A typical assignment might ask the student to consult two current weekly news magazines (e.g., *U.S. News and World Report, Time, Business Week)* and compare the coverage of the same news event. The assignment allows the student to demonstrate his ability to analyze current media in terms of audience appeals, diction, order of information, inclusion or exclusion of information, style, use of examples, and the like. Such analysis leads naturally into a discussion of source discrimination. That discussion and exercise leads into a consideration of research techniques, which in turn paves the way for the final paper--a lengthy, researched and documented, classical argument. In this last essay, the student is called upon to demonstrate every notion he has learned during the semester.

One of my students made an apt analogy between the approach of this composition course and a recitation made popular a few years ago. It begins with a single element, *one hen;* it builds to include two elements, *one hen, two ducks;* it continues to a third element--*one hen, two ducks, three squawking geese;* a fourth--*one hen, two ducks, three squawking geese, four limerick oysters;* and so on until the tenth and final element. When a student has accomplished the equivalent of presenting the whole recitation without hesitation he has accomplished a great deal indeed.

Because writing concepts are presented in a logical sequence and in an unintimidating environment, the student is likely to retain what he is taught. Students recognize a cohesive writing process. This cohesiveness allows them to explore their own intuitive writing responses and imagination.

The instructors who have taught with this approach enjoy the class because they "feel less like judges and more like guides." Throughout the course they are presented with examples of the student's ability to handle isolated notions and then to incorporate them into the essay form. The instructors are able to slow down or quicken the pace of learning, depending upon the ability of the students to absorb and demonstrate the information they are exposed to. Thus by carefully tailoring the pace of instruction, the instructors avoid the possibility that students will overreach their limitations. The continual equipping of students to perform progressively more sophisticated assignments builds their confidence.

Although the initial stages of this course are perhaps more basic than most, the instructors agree that the student is actually being better equipped to progress farther than he would in a conventional course. Most instructors also enjoy the discipline required of them to teach an accretively structured course. They feel more ordered than whey they taught readings/writings courses.

This course is not an absolute answer to the problem of freshman students who are weak writers, but it is, I believe, a significant step toward improving their skills. They become involved in the writing process in ways that are new and exciting to them. The course is flexible, tailored to meet very specific needs, and most important, it is relevant rather than abstract.

WORKING TOWARD PAPER-TO-PAPER CONTINUITY IN THE TEACHING OF WRITING

Katherine M. Jones Loheyde

Writing teachers often tend to correct or comment on every error in a student's paper. College students in English methods classes, as a case in point, are more worried about "missing" an error in a practice paper than providing any information to the student to improve his or her writing. Let's look for a minute at what it is we correct in a student's paper—how many of those famed red marks relate at all to *writing*—as opposed to spelling, punctuation, or usage. Initially, of course, the key problem in teaching writing is recognizing mistakes in writing. However, of greater concern to most teachers is synthesizing errors into the larger problems of which they are symptoms and explaining how to improve the student's writing over time.

Most teachers are adept at recognizing mistakes; many need, however, to develop the ability to synthesize errors into larger problem areas, to decide which problem to address first, and to create a strategy for paper-to-paper continuity, an often neglected point in teaching writing.

The Red Pencil Syndrome

We can easily forget that a piece of paper is one-dimensional—all marks appear of the same weight to a student. Therefore, teachers should at least be selective in those errors they mark on the student's paper. However, recognition of mistakes alone does nothing to improve a student's writing. In teaching writing, then, two steps are necessary at this point:

1. Recognition that many of the errors spotted on a student's paper are really symptoms (and often very consistent symptoms) of the student's writing problems. The first step in teaching writing is to be able to look at the whole composition, as the initial real problems of writing are not likely to emerge from paragraph-to-paragraph scrutiny and error-spotting.
2. Recognition that all the problems of student writer cannot be addressed at once. The teacher must therefore set priorities. A student may progress best by attacking one or two problems at a time—few can handle more than two or three writing problems at once. The issue here is ordering areas to work on for each individual student.

WRITING GETS DISCOURAGING FOR THE STUDENT WHO KEEPS GETTING BACK PAPERS THAT CRITICIZE A NEW PROBLEM... WITHOUT MENTIONING IMPROVEMENT ON PAST PROBLEMS.

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For beginning writing teachers, the criteria for ordering writing problems may at best be nebulous. As this decision is dependent on the individual student writer, it suffices here to list some of the bases for the decisions: the teacher may want to begin with the point s/he perceives as the most important, the easiest for the student to learn first, the most inclusive problem—like organization; or a more specific problem —like transitions within paragraphs. If initial success for the writer is important to the teacher, choosing something that the student can readily master may be important.

The teacher has at this point, then, found errors, categorized them into the writing problems of which they are representative or symptomatic, and ordered those problems for the individual student.

Insuring Continuity

Now follows the point that beginning teachers may neglect and methods textbooks often ignore: how to insure paper-to-paper continuity. This is necessary in that to see improvement we need to know what we last told the student. Writing gets discouraging for the student who keeps getting back papers that criticize a new problem every time without mentioning the improvement on the past problems. Beginning teachers often attack—and I use the word deliberately—each student paper as though it were not part of a continual writing process, but rather a separate entity, completely discrete from what writing the student had done before.

Traditionally, our only means of keeping track of paper-to-paper improvement has been the grade book—which is useless as a source of anything other than radical improvement or decline, or missing papers by the student. Even though many teachers keep student writing in folders, we know that such folders do not make for easy reference on questions about the student's progress.

One of the most successful ways of keeping track of a student's progress is the following. Use a large notecard for each student (see sample), adding any material pertinent at the top—e.g., course, class hours, etc. Usually one line will suffice for each paper. Using a number for each paper, put the *topic* of the paper, or some note that will help to recall that pupil's specific work. Then, after reading the paper, synthesizing errors into writing problems and deciding which problems to pursue, jot down those problems, possibly noting in some way the ones you stressed through your comments on the paper or in conferring with the student. These cards are for the teacher's eyes only, allowing you to include any information you wish to remember about a particular paper.

SAMPLE NOTECARD FOR WRITING TEACHERS

Jill Johnson - Section 3, "Writing from Experience" - Fall, '79

1. *flood - good description of family, spelling needs work - organization big prob.*
2. *Char. sketch - grandmother - description still good, sticks to topic, organization better - focus on unity.*
3. *Summer job - (boring) - details lifeless, doesn't stick to thesis (last-minute paper?)*
4. *Trip to New York - much better! Well-organized - nice details! A*

Now instead of reacting to each paper without the history of the student's writing at hand, the teacher can see on which areas s/he emphasized need for work--which gives the teacher a foundation for praise.

Furthermore, this strategy gives the teacher a ready reference to work done by the student that can better personalize writing instruction: "In that paper you wrote about your first job at Burger King, you had a hard time sticking to your main idea--but in last week's paper on lifesaving most of the details reinforced your thesis."

The teacher can note the grade, whether the paper was late, and any other important information on the card.

Then in a card file, grouped by each class, the teacher has a ready reference that can provide a useful tool in helping kids write better.

CALL FOR PAPERS

We are soliciting critical essays for an anthology on the general subject "The Choice of Life: World Views in Children's Literature."

The thesis we hope to investigate and criticize is that the best children's literature posits one of two world views: the Religious, which centers on supra-rational belief, apocalypse, and man's insufficiency, as in C. S. Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, or the Humanist, which commits itself to rationality, progress, and man's autonomy, as in E. B. White's *Charlotte's Web*.

Is this thesis acceptable? Is it accurate? Can both views inform a single work in various mixes? Do children respond to these views consciously? Or even unconsciously? Do they appear equally in fantasy and realistic fiction? What does their treatment tell us about our time and children's place in it?

Please address inquiries or manuscripts to either of the editors:

Professor Joseph Milner
Department of Education
Wake Forest University
Winston-Salem NC 27109

Professor Rosa Ann Moore
Department of English
UT-Chattanooga
Chattanooga TN 37402

Papers should be in by September 1, 1980.

IMITATION IN THE BASIC WRITING CLASS

Irwin Weiser

We sometimes forget that students in basic writing courses have different needs from those of students in introductory composition courses. Some basic writing students need practice with skills such as punctuation and spelling, many need to learn to write Standard English, and most need discipline enough to recognize that errors in writing are important—that people for whom they will have to write will judge them by how closely their writing conforms to the conventions of written Standard English. While it is a commonplace assumption that people learn to write by writing, such a statement, usually applied to composition students, also assumes that the writer is familiar with some basic conventions of Standard English. The assumption is less valid when applied to basic writing students, who frequently do not know enough about Standard English to conform to its conventions, who are not prepared to meet with even limited success as writers, and for whom writing becomes not a learning process, but an exercise in frustration and failure. Similarly, techniques that emphasize the students' intrinsic knowledge of English, especially spoken English, such as sentence combining, are difficult for basic writing students. For example, a student assigned "Ashtray," an early exercise from William Strong's *Sentence Combining,*[1] attempted to combine the five clusters into a single sentence: "Heaps of cigarettes, crusts of food, and poems written on paper napkins offerings have been accepted with indifference by the ugly, fat porcelain monstrosity, which insides are blackened with millions of ashes, which is an ashtray that is squatting in the middle of the table." This overcombining, especially the misuse and misconstruction of relative clauses and modifiers, is not uncommon in basic writing students and suggests that such students who do not possess a functional knowledges of grammatical conventions in Standard English cannot be expected to apply them in their sentence-combining transformations—or in other writing.[2]

Basic writing classes should, therefore, begin with basics. Students need to learn and practice some of the conventions of Standard English and, especially, their applications, just as they need to learn the basic rules of a sport before they can expect to play properly. They need, at the least, to be able to distinguish sentences from fragments, and so they need to be able to identify nouns and verbs, subjects and predicates, and to understand how modifiers in the forms of words, phrases, and clauses function in sentences. Students must also be able to distinguish between English that is acceptable and expected in academic and professional writing and other dialects, colloquialisms, and the like. And while this may

> THEY ARE NOT FORCED TO JUGGLE CONTENT, STYLE, MECHANICS, AND GRAMMAR ALL AT ONCE, AS THEY MUST DO WHEN THEY WRITE ORIGINAL PARAGRAPHS OR THEMES...

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require drill and practice in these fundamentals early in the term, it does not imply that students must memorize rules, but that they be able to apply them. Nor must skill-building exercises be allowed to supplant written discourse as the primary means of evaluating students' progress. We know that students can learn to do exercises correctly; one learns what one does repeatedly. Unless there is transfer from exercise to discourse, students will not have learned to write more effectively. For this reason, exercises and drills should be looked upon as preparation for the writing practice which will constitute the basis for evaluation.

Writing practice in basic writing should begin with writing situations that promote success. Students should not simply be told to produce discourse or assigned topics to write paragraphs and essays about: the result of these kinds of assignments will be error-filled writing that will frustrate both students and teachers. For this reason, imitation and imitation-derived writing practice are logical approaches in the basic writing class. Four categories of imitative techniques that might be used in basic writing are, in order of sophistication, exact copying, controlled composition, sentence combining, and stylistic imitation.

Occasionally we are faced with students who have practically no familiarity with conventions of written English such as capitalization, punctuation, sentence structure, and spelling. These students do not know how writing should look, or how it should feel coming out of their pens, because they have had little experience in reading or writing. Initial writing assignments for these students may simply be to copy, word for word, punctuation mark for punctuation mark, brief passages of Standard English discourse. The passages should be clear, functional prose, providing examples of narration, description, exposition, and argumentation, and should not be so stylistically ornate or sophisticated that the students could not be expected to later model their own writing on them. Passages may be selected from works of fiction, from popular magazines, or from essay texts such as those used in composition courses. It is important to choose passages that can be copied in ten to twenty minutes, since after this time students may make errors due to fatigue. Students should not be asked to copy whole essays, but only a paragraph or two.

The purpose of such rote copying is to familiarize students with grammatical and mechanical conventions, with spelling--in short, to give students some experience with what correct writing is. Such copying is a challenge for some students because it requires them to discipline themselves and to focus their attention on detail, so that their imitations are exact, and thus correct. While the amount of time during a semester spent on exact copying will depend on the individual student's progress, no more than two or three weeks at the beginning of the course should be used for this activity. No doubt, rote copying can be frustrating and even insulting to students, and once students have copied two or three passages correctly, they are likely to see no reason for more copying. And they are right: the teacher must monitor students' progress, and move students to other writing assignments when it becomes apparent that the copying has become so mechanized and boring that errors become the result of inattention.

As a second step for students who have become proficient at exact copying and as a beginning technique for the majority of the students who take basic writing courses, work with another imitative technique, controlled composition, provides writing practice that at once helps control errors and begins to demonstrate the flexibility of language. In controlled composition, students are asked to imitate passages of discourse,

but to make grammatical changes according to given instructions. Students might be asked to rewrite a passage, changing a singular noun to plural, and would be expected not only to do that, but also to make other appropriate changes in pronoun and verb number so that the passage remained correct. They might be directed to change a passage from present to past tense, or past to future, active to passive, and so on. The teacher checks each controlled composition for correctness, both of transformations and of copying the original passage, circling errors, and returning the compositions to students, who examine and correct their errors before moving to the next passage. A portion of an exercise from the controlled composition text *Write Me A Ream* follows.

> *USING COMPUTERS AT HOME*
>
> adapted from an article in *Popular Science*, May, 1967
>
> I use a real computer in my home. With its help, I figure out whether or not to change the heating system of my house from oil to gas. I also use it to decide when it is economical to trade in my car. My computer's amazing ability can even be put to work on my income tax! Furthermore, when I get bored, I amuse myself by playing games with my computer. It knows tick-tack-toe, blackjack, nim, and dice.

Rewrite the entire passage changing the words *a real computer* to *two real computers* (in sentence 1), and the words *a special-purpose computer* to *two special-purpose computers* (in sentence 10). Make all other necessary changes as well.

Rewrite the entire passage changing the word *I* to *Mr. Jones*. You can also use the word *he* once you have mentioned Mr. Jones, but you must use his name again at the beginning of the second paragraph. Your first sentence will be:

Mr. Jones uses a real computer in his home.

Pretend that the writer of this article does not yet have a computer but will have one next year. Rewrite the entire passage beginning:

Next year I will use a real computer in my home.

Pretend that the writer had a computer last year but does not have one any longer. Rewrite the entire passage beginning:

Last year I used a real computer in my home.[3]

The point of controlled composition is summarized clearly by Donna Gorrell in a paper entitled "Controlled Composition as an Introduction to Sentence Combining." She points out that

> *the primary aim of controlled composition is error-control, which makes it appropriate for a basic writing class,* whose members have usually been advised there because of errors in writing. Students are forced to analyze the problem, work their way through it by using what they know about language, and then proofread carefully before turning in the

> assignment. Throughout the entire exercise they are concentrating on the problem, not the content. [Italics mine]

Gorrell further points out that controlled composition "can prepare students for the challenges of sentence combining by guiding them through the syntactic manipulations that underlie the transformations that sentence combining requires."[4] A second connection between controlled composition and sentence combining is that the exercises of both techniques result in student-produced discourse in the form of paragraphs or short essays. And in both controlled composition and sentence combining, students are involved with manipulation of content that is already present; they are not forced to deal with compositional techniques of invention and development; they are imitating what is before them. The imitative aspect of sentence combining differs from that of exact copying or controlled composition since, if students have been prepared to use the conventions of Standard English by these other techniques, there will be few, and often no, incorrect versions. The measure of success shifts from simple correctness to effectiveness.

Stylistic imitation of model passages is a more sophisticated use of imitation that allows students to be more inventive than exact copying, controlled composition, or sentence combining does, while still offering a guide for their writing. The goal of stylistic imitation is for students to produce passages that are similar in mode, tone, length, and syntax to the model passage. These imitations may be close; that is, students may be expected to use the same or similar topics and content and to imitate the diction and syntax of the model passage quite strictly, or they may be loose imitations, in which the students' goal is to approximate the length, tone, and style of the passage without concentrating on exact construction of syntax, number of sentences, and so forth.[5] Close stylistic imitation, especially, helps students become aware of options in syntax and diction available to them and provides practice with more sophisticated prose than they are accustomed to writing. It can break stylistic habits, helping students see how content can be enhanced by its form, giving them experience in sentence patterns that may not be part of their repertoire, forcing them to try styles that they might not otherwise explore. Because of this, stylistic imitation is useful to writing students regardless of their ability: students in basic, introductory, and advanced writing courses can become more sensitive to style with this technique.[6]

While these four imitative techniques can be used as progressive steps in a basic writing course, they should not be construed as a full-semester, exclusive approach to teaching such a course. With great common sense, William Strong points out that "*Sentence Combining* is neither a panacea nor a complete composition program in itself. It is better viewed as a skill-building adjunct to regular composition work."[7] This same common sense should be applied to the use of imitation techniques in the basic writing class. These techniques cannot entirely replace review and drill in the conventions of Standard English early in the semester, nor should they replace practice with student-generated writing later in the course. Further, while there is a progression from exact copying to controlled composition to sentence combining to stylistic imitation, based on the degree of linguistic sophistication required of the student, not all students in basic writing courses will need each step. Few will need work with exact copying; those with grammatical and mechanical competence may begin using sentence combining after a small amount of work with controlled composition.

Because the content and (with the exception of sentence combining) the form are provided in the kinds of imitation techniques discussed in the preceding paragraphs,

students generally meet with success when they do them. They are not forced to juggle content, style, mechanics, and grammar all at once, as they must do when they write original paragraphs or themes on assigned or self-generated topics. The emphasis on correctness in the copying and controlled composition exercises, the manipulations of sentence combining, and the model passages provided in the stylistic imitations help students improve grammatical and mechanical skills through writing practice based on already correct models which—and this is most important for students in basic writing classes—are written in Standard English. Their writing habits begin to change not so much because they have learned rules that govern Standard English, but because they have practiced using them in their imitations.

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[1]William Strong, Sentence Combining (New York: Random House, 1973), p. 13.

[2]This is not to say that sentence combining does not have a place in the basic writing class, nor is it to deny the efficacy of sentence combining as a technique for improving the writing of students in composition courses. Convincing research that supports the use of sentence combining in college composition classes has been done at Miami University and reported by Donald Daiker, Andrew Kerek, and Max Morenberg, "Sentence Combining and Syntactic Maturity in Freshman English," CCC, 29 (1978), 36-41, and Max Morenberg, Donald Daiker, and Andrew Kerek, "Sentence Combining at the College Level: An Experimental Study," Research in the Teaching of English, 12 (1978), 245-56.

[3]Linda Ann Kunz and Robert R. Viscount, Write Me A Ream (New York: Teachers College Press, 1977), p. 55.

[4]Donna Gorrell, "Controlled Composition as an Introduction to Sentence Combining," Conference on Sentence Combining and the Teaching of Writing, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, 27 October 1978.

[5]The terms "close" and "loose" imitation are used by Frank J. D'Angelo, both in an article "Imitation and Style," CCC, 24 (October, 1973), 283-90, and in his excellent text Process and Thought in Composition (Cambridge, Mass.: Winthrop, 1977), pp. 301-31. Examples of model passages and student imitations appear on these pages.

[6]For discussion and application of imitation theory in more advanced writing courses, see Edward P. J. Corbett, "The Theory and Practice of Imitation in Classical Rhetoric," CCC, 22 (October, 1971), 242-50, and Corbett's Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 496-538.

[7]William Strong, Instructor's Manual for Sentence Combining (New York: Random House, 1973), p. 4.

SOME NEEDED RESEARCH ON WRITING AND DIALECT

R. W. Reising

On November 16, 1978, the profession suffered a tragic loss. The passing of Mina Shaughnessy deprived us of a voice of rare power and impact. She was indeed what all of us constantly strive to be but few of us can ever hope to become: an excellent teacher, an exemplary researcher and writer, and—most important of all—an exceptional human being. As long as writing is taught, she will be remembered and missed.

Errors and Expectations[1] is the publication that flashes across our minds whenever Mina's name is mentioned. It is, as was its creator, uncommon in its compassion and sense, exquisite in its linguistic and pedagogical riches. To it, all of us have turned innumerable times since its appearance in 1977; to it, we will turn even more often in the years ahead. It occupies a unique place in our professional esteem as well as in the emergence of composition as a discipline: simultaneously we respect it as a seminal work and as a classic; for us it is both a beginning and an end—a pioneering effort which, quite possibly, will never be surpassed.

BLITHELY--OR NOT SO BLITHELY--THEY PURSUE THEIR DAILY CHORES UNEQUIPPED WITH AND UNSUPPORTED BY INFORMATION THAT COULD LEAD THEM TO DECREASED ANXIETY...AND GREATER PEDAGOGICAL SUCCESS.

But *Errors and Expectations* is not the lone publication of Mina Shaughnessy's that I have found profitable in recent months. Less than a year before her death, *College Composition and Communication* carried an essay of hers, "Some Needed Research on Writing," which poses four questions whose answers, if ever evolved, can I believe prove invaluable to us in our work with, in Mina's words, "unprepared—severely unprepared—students":

1. What are the signs of growth in writing among adults whose development as writers has been delayed by inferior preparation but who are then exposed to intensive instruction in writing?
2. What sub-skills of writing, heretofore absorbed by students over time in a variety of situations, can be effectively developed through direct and systematic instruction at the freshman level?
3. What skills have we failed to take note of in our analysis of academic tasks?
4. What goes on and what ought to go on in the composition classroom?[2]

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These four questions have constantly been on my mind since I first happened upon them, but most often since the summer of 1978, when, under the direction of James Sledd,[3] I initiated the first systematic study of the language, present as well as past, of the Lumbees, the largest group of American Indians east of the Mississippi. About 40,000 of them reside in and near Robeson County, North Carolina, site of the institution at which I teach, Pembroke State University. Although my research has gone nicely thus far, and although I remain optimistic that, when completed, it will prove helpful to scholars and teachers alike, I must concede that to date it has spawned at least as many questions as answers. Especially intriguing are those among the former that relate to pedagogies appropriate for coping with the current-day language of the Lumbees, which I am convinced represents a distinctive dialect of English. I identify my questions with Mina's, and in a very real sense append them to her list, not because I wish to appear presumptuous but because I am convinced that, although she never mentions dialect in her essay, that language consideration doubtless helped to trigger and structure her four inquiries. In all of her publications, she displayed a keen awareness of the impact of dialect on and in writing; and, as a result, it is crucial, I think, to weigh that impact as we consider, and attempt to develop responses to, the questions that she presented in her final article for *CCC*. In short, I am certain that Mina's questions in that article relate as intimately to dialect as do mine in this one.

Three additional comments are necessary before I identify and briefly treat the questions that have come to me as a result of Mina's article and my own investigations. The first concerns my awareness that Mina, in her article and elsewhere, revealed a special interest in "adult learners," in "adult beginners" who "depend as students did not depend in the past upon the classroom and the teacher for the acquisition of the skill of writing" ("Some Needed Research on Writing"). I share that special interest, and my questions, I hope, reflect that I do. Not only are such students fascinating in the perceptions and values that they bring to the composition classroom but they obviously present challenges, linguistic and cognitive, not provided by typical eighteen-year-olds. Fortunately, my institution is making, and doubtless will continue to make, unprecedented efforts to accommodate "adult beginners"; and since numerous Lumbees are among those beginners, my questions, like my dialect studies and my teaching of recent years, have taken shape with them in mind.

I want to point out, too, that, along with countless other researchers into the language, I believe that vastly different dialects manifest themselves similarly in written English. Again, Mina's words are revealing: "Most students, whether they started out speaking Chinese or BEV [Black English Vernacular] or Navajo, seem to end up in freshman English with a common stock of errors that appear most often to arise directly from interference from other languages and dialects, from problems of predictability within the system called formal English, or from the difficulties associated with writing rather than speaking English" (*Errors and Expectations*, p. 157). Given that "common stock of errors," my questions loom as important not merely to composition teachers of Lumbees but to composition teachers of minorities in general.

Finally, like the four with which I have aligned them, my questions are not necessarily intimately related to one another. The lone elements uniting them are writing, dialect, and, once more in Mina's words, "the need to begin where the beginning is, even if that falls outside the traditional territory of college composition" ("Some Needed Research on Writing").

My first question is: *Can sentence-combining exercises, if appropriately constructed, aid both in eliminating dialect features from written English*

and in developing syntactic maturity? During the past decade, no pedagogy has fired the imaginations of teachers, grade school to university, as has sentence combining, which research indicates can lead to substantial gains in syntactic maturity. There is little question about its popularity, effectiveness, or promise. Teachers employ it, journals discuss it, and conferences highlight it. Undoubtedly, it is "the in thing"—for the best of reasons.

I have long maintained that one of the paramount advantages provided by sentence-combining activities is that they force to the surface, naturally and invariably, problems with Edited American English (EAE) not directly related to syntactic complexity. Students caught up in such activities cannot fail to reveal weaknesses in a horde of areas—especially, perhaps, in word forms, parallelism, and internal punctuation—if indeed they have such weaknesses. There is simply no way of escaping or hiding problems when sentence combining imposes its demands.

It would be useful, therefore, to create, and determine the effects of, sentence-combining exercises cued to eliciting dialect errors. I use the word *cued* purposely: my guess is that such exercises would have to be cued (or signaled, if one prefers that term), rather than open, if they are to force into view the errors I have in mind. Regardless, however, one point I can state with certainty: the publishing houses and/or teachers attempting to craft such exercises would have as a salient concern an appropriate sequence, one that is both syntactically and dialectally valid. Theirs would not be an easy task; yet I am convinced that it would be a worthwhile one.

William Strong, the well-known authority on sentence combining, concurs.[4] I believe he would also agree that the research that could subsequently center on the results of the merger would prove immensely helpful to the profession.

My second question is: *Which mode or modes of written discourse, which writing tasks, and which structures most encourage and most often elicit dialect errors?* Research indicates that all modes do not make the same demands on syntax—that, for example, as Christine San Jose has demonstrated, argumentative prose possesses the greatest syntactic complexity and descriptive prose the least.[5] Correlation studies involving dialect blemishes and the modes, tasks, and structures of EAE would prove equally helpful, I think, and, therefore, I urge that they be undertaken. Whether any significant correlations exist between the considerations mentioned, I do not know, but I cannot proclaim with certainty that they do not. Obviously research could enlighten me, as well as others.

The question—and the possibility—nags at me, I must admit, because among the Lumbees, my research thus far indicates, deletion of the *-ed* suffix from past tense regular verbs is statistically the single most distinctive grammatical feature marring their writing, a fact resulting, perhaps, from the group's interest in and dependence on narration. Like Indians elsewhere, the Lumbees feel most comfortable with "story telling," and their written discourse thus makes inordinate demands upon past tense verb forms. It is entirely possible, I suspect, that research into the relationship between dialect and mode, task, and structure can provide us with valuable information about the writing assignments and sequences most appropriate for composition students who, like the Lumbees, command a dialect different from Network Standard English. I suspect, too, that Primary Trait Scoring might prove to be a valuable ally in such research.

My third question is: *How does hemisphericity relate to the writing problems and errors of dialect speakers?* In recent years, psychologists have inundated the profession with insights into the workings of the two cerebral hemispheres, and some among us—Janet Emig, for instance[6]—have made helpful attempts to evaluate and speculate on those insights. Like hundreds of other composition teachers, I am fascinated by what both groups have provided, and I hunger to read and hear more.

Now it may well be appropriate for researchers with a knowledge of dialects to investigate the relationship between the two hemispheres and the efforts, successful and otherwise, of people like the Lumbees to command EAE. There seems little reason to doubt that both hemispheres play key roles in the writing process, but—to the best of my knowledge—no one has yet attempted to relate the workings of either or both of them to the composition accomplishments and errors of dialect speakers. The electroencephalogram looms as useful in this undertaking, if and when it occurs, as does neurometrics, a method of developing brain profiles that "employs analysis of a large number of evoked potentials, sometimes using sophisticated stimuli, such as stories or geometric shapes."[7] The recent and ongoing research of a horde of neurologists and psychologists will likewise prove invaluable, but, in all probability, none more so than that provided by Howard Gardner,[8] E. Roy John,[9] Richard M. Restak,[10] and Charles Shagrass.[11] Not to be overlooked, either, are those recently or soon-to-be completed studies that explore the relationships—and especially the differences—between oral and written English; the work of James Deese,[12] Thomas J. Farrell,[13] and Gerard R. Giordano[14] will prove among the most significant, I suspect, in illuminating those relationships.

Knowledge of hemisphere functions can enhance our knowledge of our discipline. Those among us fascinated by the attempts of dialect speakers to control EAE have special reasons to contribute to and to assess that knowledge.

My final question is, perhaps, the most important of the four. Certainly, it houses the greatest potential for controversy, as well as for dialogue both within higher education and between composition teachers and other groups in American society: *How do college and university teachers outside English, and how do people in responsible positions outside academe, perceive and evaluate dialect errors in written discourse?* Teachers of composition at all levels, we realize, lack answers to countless questions basic to their discipline and commitments. Blithely—or not so blithely—they pursue their daily chores unequipped with and unsupported by information that could lead them to decreased anxiety, less demanding routines, and greater pedagogical success. One of those questions Sledd has raised in my presence: how much and what kinds of writing do college and university graduates encounter in the contemporary world? No one, Sledd maintains, can respond authoritatively to that question, and I am inclined to agree with him. There appears to be reluctance, as he suggests, to develop a substantive response to it—and perhaps to other inquiries, too.

I hope, however, that reluctance will not characterize attempts to delineate perceptions and valuations of dialect blemishes in EAE by groups other than English teachers. I see no good reason why it should. What we learn from such research will doubtless provide us with better direction for our courses and teaching—an admirable goal, certainly.

But I am not naive. What we learn may be painful, too. It may force us to admit that we are indeed "a rare breed," that other groups within higher education, as well as groups outside it, have different and less demanding perceptions of EAE. In short, we may well determine that we are alone, or at best in a minority, in respecting and requiring certain grammatical (some would call them "cosmetic") features in written discourse. Two such features will illustrate my concern. The *-d* and *-ed* endings historically associated with regular verb past participles in noun-modifying, noun-preceding positions are, I suspect, seen and valued by few educated persons outside our profession. In recent years, and with increasing frequency, I have detected in literate, well-received phrases an absence of those endings, and thus I cannot avoid wondering whether English teachers are not fast becoming the lone group sensitive to and squeamish about such phrases as "skim milk," "all return checks," and "cube steaks."

Another grammatical concern about which I am equally curious is concord or agreement of subjects and verbs widely separated from one another. My guess is that English teachers impose heavier demands in this respect than do other professionals. The following trio of statements lend credibility to my suspicion: all three were composed not by dialectally weak writers but by educated Americans—two by journalists, the third by a psychologist—whose prose regularly appears in the public press:

> Violence plus the ability to tough it out and slug it out are a natural part....
>
> If the arbitrary nature of these categories make it sound as if Gaylin were guilty....
>
> The program under Gillman for the last two seasons were marred,....

Isolated examples, even an abundance of them, will prove little, I realize, about perceptions and expectations held by groups other than English teachers. What is needed, obviously, is research into the question I have posed. The work of Joseph Williams, Professor of English and Linguistics at the University of Chicago, can aid that research; especially helpful will be his essay "Re-evaluating Evaluating," an eleven-page repository of insights and inquiries into responses to written discourse.[15]

So that my remarks will be complete, please allow me to make two concessions before closing. I concede, first, that there may be more important questions bearing on dialect and writing than the four that I have raised.[16] If not the most important, however, mine are, undeniably, the most timely, given current research into sentence combining, rhetoric, hemisphericity, and evaluation. Certainly, the advances in our discipline and in related ones have moved us to an opportune moment, perhaps even an ideal one, for the investigations I have outlined.

Finally, I concede that I have not even hinted at that question which is destined in the future to overarch all questions, regardless of importance, related to dialect and writing. I have avoided it not because I fear it but because it has stronger ties with economics and politics than with language and pedagogy, the focus of this paper. Will colleges and universities continue "the current retreat--no, rout--into the elitist irresponsibility of earlier decades, where once again we agree to teach only those who can learn without our active and imaginative efforts..."?[17] This question is frightening in its premises and tragic in its implications. Even more frightening and

tragic, however, is the affirmative response that may well emerge and echo throughout the land in the years ahead. If and when such a response bombards our ears, then, indeed, all of our best efforts at research on dialect and writing, like all of Mina Shaughnessy's dreams for disadvantaged writers, will have gone for naught. Undeniably, as Emig has noted in Mina's obituary, this country will have become "truly no longer morally habitable."

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[1]Mina Shaughnessy, Errors and Expectations (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977).

[2]Mina Shaughnessy, "Some Needed Research on Writing," College Composition and Communication, 28 (December, 1977), pp. 317-320.

[3]During the summer of 1978, I was a member of Sledd's NEH-funded seminar in "Standard English: Social Control and Individual Freedom," held at the University of Texas at Austin.

[4]Strong indicated his agreement in a conversation with me on November 4, 1979, at the Fall Conference of the Virginia Association of Teachers of English, held in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

[5]Christine San Jose, Grammatical Structures in Four Modes of Writing at the Fourth Grade Level. Doctoral dissertation, Syracuse University, 1972.

[6]Janet Emig, "Hand, Eye, Brain: Some 'Basics' in the Writing Process," in Research on Composing: Points of Departure, edited by Charles R. Cooper and Lee Odell (Urbana: NCTE, 1978), pp. 59-71.

[7]Richard M. Restak, "Brain Potentials: Signaling Our Inner Thoughts," Psychology Today, 12 (March, 1979), pp. 42-54, 90.

[8]See, for instance, Howard Gardner, "What We Know (And Don't Know) About the Two Halves of the Brain," Harvard Magazine (March-April, 1978), pp. 24-27.

[9]See, for instance, E. Roy John, "Neurometrics," Science, vol. 196, no. 4297 (1977).

[10]See, for instance, Richard M. Restak, "Brain Potentials: Signaling Our Inner Thoughts" (cited above, note 7).

[11]See, for instance, Charles Shagrass, "Evoked Potentials in Man," in Biological Foundations of Psychiatry, edited by Robert G. Grenell and Sabit Gabag (New York: Raven Press, 1975).

[12]See, for instance, James Deese, "Thought into Speech," American Scientist, 66 (May-June, 1978), pp. 314-321.

[13]See, for instance, Thomas J. Farrell, "Differentiating Writing from Talking," CCC, 29 (December, 1978), pp. 346-350.

[14]At present Gerard R. Giordano, of New Mexico State University, is completing a study bearing on the relationships between oral and written English; he plans to publish his findings in several articles.

[15]Joseph Williams, "Re-evaluating Evaluating," Basic Writing, 1 (Spring/Summer, 1978), pp. 7-17.

[16]In a letter to me March 9, 1979, Lee Odell poses two questions of perhaps greater importance than the four treated in this paper. Regardless of relative importance, the two are unusually provocative: (1) Within a single dialect is there a range of voices that are appropriate for a range of speaker-audience relationships? (2) If the dialect includes this range of voices/audiences, how are these various speaker-audience relationships indicated?

[17]Janet Emig, "Mina Pendo Shaughnessy, an obituary," CCC, 30 (February, 1979), pp. 37-38.

READER-RESPONSE GRAMMAR

Stephen K. Tollefson

The majority of those of us who teach composition seem to agree, now, that teaching grammar in isolation has little if any effect on the improvement of student writing. Unfortunately, this fact has caused numbers of teachers to assume, then, that grammar is anathema to learning how to write. The catch is that teachers often overlook the words "in isolation."

In isolation, grammar is simply the set of rules governing the forms words take and the ways in which those words combine to form various sentence structures. Plowing through a grammar book with little or no regard for students' current and real problems in writing of course does no good. Why drill the avoidance of fragments into the heads of students who don't write fragments? It is too easy for writing teachers, especially those of us who teach remedial writing, to assume that our students have absolutely no understanding of English and, therefore, that they need to learn everything, to memorize every grammatical term it took us years to understand. So we spend a week on fragments, two weeks on commas, perhaps most of the term on that ogre, modification. On the other hand, when we abandon grammar instruction, we are fooling ourselves. As soon as we explain to a student that a particular phrase is in the wrong place, or that if we say "people" we must say "are," not "is," we are teaching grammar. We all teach grammar: the question is not whether we should, but how we should.

WHILE THE BEST WRITING MAY COME FROM THE HEART, IT NEEDS TO BE SHAPED BY THE MIND....

"Reader-response Grammar" is a method of dealing with students' actual problems in writing while teaching them some valuable grammar at the same time. This method is based on several observations. First, when we read, our experience tells us to look for "cues"—words, phrases, and punctuation that cause us to expect certain things to follow. This is true for all readers, not just English teachers, who can't read the newspaper without correcting it. Second, this method depends on the idea that the writer's primary responsibility is to the reader. It is the writer's duty to give the correct "cues" and to avoid "miscues," those words and phrases that lead the reader to expect certain things that are not in the end delivered. For instance, in the following sentence, the grammar of the first part leads the reader to expect a certain kind of conclusion, a particular grammatical structure, which is in fact missing: "To people who know anything about education are well aware that the government is not interested in schools." The opening, "To people who know anything about edu-

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cation..," is a common structure that, because we are familiar with English, we expect to be followed by a compatible structure: "...the government's stingy treatment of the schools is not unexpected," for example. The sentence ends in a different way, however, and the result is not only an error, but a moment's pause by the reader to straighten out the meaning. The writer has provided us with a miscue, has led us astray and confused us.

The final observation about "reader-response grammar" is that this method forces us to remember, ourselves, and to remind our students, that they already know a great deal about grammar, that they are masters of their language. It relies heavily on their experience with language, on their acquired sense of what *sounds* right to them. Students, I believe, often become so convinced that writing is an altogether different matter from speaking that they make errors on paper that they wouldn't make in speech. The above example is a useful illustration of this point—most students would not have *spoken* it that way, but in fact would have eliminated the opening word, "to," which would have resulted in a correct sentence.

So much for theory and background; the application to student work is simple. Students need to see that they are providing the reader with cues and that when they have made a grammatical mistake, they more than likely have frustrated the expectations the reader has taken from that cue. Errors do not always lead to misunderstanding, but if they cause the reader to pause, to question, or to laugh in places where such responses are not our intention, then we, as writers, are not succeeding as well as we might.

In the following sentences selected from several different sets of student papers, the blanks indicate a place for you to fill in what you expect to be there: it may be only one word, or it may be a group of words, a phrase or clause. This is not a guessing game, and there are no "right" answers; simply fill the blank with the most logical word or phrase. It is the structure, not the content, of what you fill in that counts. Finally, there is no order or logical sequence to the content of the sentences: they were chosen simply to demonstrate the variety of errors that students actually make in their writing. DO NOT LOOK AT SET TWO UNTIL YOU HAVE COMPLETED SET ONE. It is important that you, as a reader, see and fulfill your own expectations first, and that, as a writer, you see correct sentences that you have made, and only afterwards, compare them to faulty ones.

SET ONE: READER-RESPONSE GRAMMAR CUE SHEET

1. *In the* essay by Burgess that I read _____.
2. *Don't let* your job *discourage* _____.
3. Burgess *lost my* _____ *when* he described what he saw when he returned to New Jersey.
4. His *descriptions* of American society *are* _____ *his personal life.*
5. Southern California happens to be in a *location where* the air becomes stagnant *due to* _____.
6. The poor, on the other hand, are thought of *as being weak,* quite limited in means, *and* _____.

7. *The* public bus systems *are in* _____.
8. American *attitudes are not based on* the breakdown of government, *but on* the power _____ possess.
9. He may send the child *to a* charm school, *a* beauty parlor, *or* _____.
10. A trolley would come in handy, especially since I don't have *a car which* _____.
11. Maybe these people who enjoy their jobs don't exactly feel that they are playing while at work, but I do understand *how happily they* _____.
12. People who drive to places when they could have taken the bus instead *take money away* _____.
13. When looking for a job, I would try to find *something in which* _____.
14. Burgess *finds fault* _____ American society.

Looking back over your work on Set One, you should notice that the italicized words are the cues indicating certain grammatical structures that will complete the sentences successfully. Notice also that there is usually no one correct version, but a variety of choices. Now examine Set Two: what actually happened when the students wrote these sentences.

SET TWO: FRUSTRATED EXPECTATIONS

1. In the essay by Burgess that I read *is un-American.*
2. Don't let your job discourage *your ability to lead a meaningful life.*
3. Burgess lost my *appeal to the article* when he described what he saw when he returned to New Jersey.
4. His descriptions of American society are *deluded with* his personal life.
5. Southern California happens to be in a location where the air becomes stagnant due to *its location on the earth.*
6. The poor, on the other hand, are thought of as being weak, quite limited in means, and *do not have much power.*
7. The public bus systems are in *most of America.*
8. American attitudes are not based on the breakdown of government, but on the power *they* possess.
9. He may send the child to a charm school, a beauty parlor, or *have a tutor.*
10. A trolley would come in handy, especially since I don't have a car which *is a little unusual.*
11. Maybe these people who enjoy their jobs don't exactly feel that they are playing while at work, but I do understand how happily they *feel about their jobs.*

12. People who drive to places when they could have taken the bus instead take money away *to build the public bussing system.*

13. When looking for a job, I would try to find something in which *I would enjoy doing.*

14. Burgess finds fault *on* American society.

Our expectations for these sentences have been frustrated, generally for two reasons: because the writer feels that writing is somehow different from speaking and so it should look and sound different; and simply because the writer has forgotten or ignored how the sentence began. In sentence 1, for instance, "in" acts as a cue to the reader, indicating a phrase to come before the main clause. Our common experience with language provides us with these kinds of expectations: "In the summer, the days are warm"; "In my opinion, this is incorrect"; "In giving, you shall receive"; and so on. In sentence 1, our expectations are fulfilled to a certain point: "In the essay by Burgess that I read..." works well enough as an opening in spite of its awkwardness. But then the sentence falls apart: "...is un-American." This predicate in itself is correct and grammatical, as is the introductory phrase, but either we are lacking a subject entirely, or it is buried in the prepositional phrase. This type of error is often labeled a "mixed construction": two structural elements, correct in themselves, that do not generate a correct sentence when juxtaposed.

We can speculate that because of the addition of the adjective clause, "that I read" (or perhaps because of its awkwardness), the student separated the initial phrase (including the key word "in") too far from what should have been the main clause, and simply forgot how the sentence began. Two possibilities for correcting the sentence present themselves immediately, either of which may have been the writer's original intention. We can omit "in" so that the sentence reads, "The essay...is un-American," or we can complete the sentence in a different way: "In the essay by Burgess, I found many un-American statements." In going over such a sentence with a student or class, try always to provide several correct versions, to give the students a sense of the numerous possibilities inherent in any given English sentence structure.

These sets of sentences are not intended to be introduced wholesale to students, although they do make an effective and palatable grammar exercise. They are intended to demonstrate that approaching grammar in this way can improve writing. For instance, in conference, a teacher can cover with a piece of paper the part of a troublesome sentence in which an error is located, and ask the student to complete—out loud—the sentence in any way that might work. This short exercise usually helps the student to produce a correct sentence. If the student has difficulty coming up with a correct sentence, the teacher should generate a similar sentence that might be easier for the student to work with. For instance, in the discussion of sentence 1, the teacher should cover everything except the opening—"In the essay by Burgess..."—and have the student provide a suitable ending. If this fails, the teacher should simplify or vary the sentence in some way; for instance, have the student complete the following phrase: "In Burgess's essay..," or "In this book...." After the student has mastered the simpler version, you usually can return to the original with more success.

After the student has generated a correct sentence, I find it helpful to discuss the nature of the sentence, why one version is correct, why one is incorrect. I want the student to become self-conscious—in a positive way—about writing in general, about grammar in particular. While the best writing may come from the heart, it needs

to be shaped by the mind, and some knowledge of the basics of grammar itself is never useless. In the context of a student's producing a correct sentence, and then referring to the incorrect version, I introduce grammatical terminology, not for its own sake, but so that I and my students may share a common vocabulary to make our work more efficient. In order to examine a sentence in detail, to take it apart and put it back together, such terminology is a necessity.

Let us examine sentence 4 the way we might do with a student. Ask the student to fill in any plausible word or group of words between "are" and "his." (For most students, not a particularly difficult task.) Some possibilities are "affected by," "influenced by," "colored by," even perhaps "concerned with" or "involved with." If the student has difficulty, reword the sentence; that it is in the passive voice may be part of the problem, so take a few moments to discuss the uses and misuses of passive constructions. Reworded, the sentence will read, "His personal life _____ his descriptions of American life." The active verbs "influences" and "affects" are obvious choices here, but the variety of possibilities is great. At first, don't steer the student in the direction of the original meaning of the sentence, but be content with any correct version. After one or two possibilities have been found, uncover the error and compare it to the newly generated versions. Why did the original sentence go haywire? And what is the nature of the error?

Pick out the subject, "descriptions," and its verbs, "are." For the sake of the discussion, the adjectival prepositional phrase, "of American society," can be discarded, and we are left with the core sentence, "His descriptions are _____ his personal life." This is a typical English sentence of the subject-verb-object variety, which indicates some connection, some relationship, between "descriptions" and "personal life." The relationship might be indicated by casting the sentence in the present progressive tense, "are ruining," for instance. However, the logic of such a sentence is questionable (can descriptions have such an effect?), and we are left with attempting to construct the sentence in the passive voice: "His descriptions are affected by his personal life," or something similar.

So what's wrong with the original "deluded with"? First, the meaning and customary usage of the word "deluded" prohibit its use in this case. Have the student use it in several other sentences, or provide some examples yourself: "Don't delude yourself," "He was deluded into thinking that she cared for him," and so on. Second, when the preposition "with" is attached to the verb "deluded," it introduces the means of the delusion, rather than the agent, as in "He deluded her with dreams of glory." People can be deluded, and they can delude. Descriptions cannot. To say that they can is an error in statement. Statement errors occur when a writer tries to make a subject do something it cannot do—they are errors in logic, in mismatching subjects, verbs, and objects. In sentence 4, for example, life cannot "delude" descriptions.

In the original sentence, the words most closely approximating the original meaning are "distorted by," and the sentence should probably read, "His descriptions of American society are distorted by his personal life." "Distorted" and "deluded" have vaguely similar sounds and meanings, and it is just possible that the student confused them and then compounded the error by using the passive voice. If the sentence had been active, the relationship between subject, verb, and object would have been clearer, and perhaps the student wouldn't have generated the incorrect statement in the first place.

This detailed examination is aimed at giving the teacher a sense of what can be done with reader-response grammar. However, in conference or in class, I would examine such a sentence in terms familiar to the students and then only to the extent that the examination is necessary to increase the students' awareness of the possibilities and complexities of their own writing. Above all, the important thing is to get them to generate a correct version out loud, and to see how the incorrect version impedes the reader's understanding of the meaning.

Of course this technique is not altogether new, but that it can be used systematically is something that most teachers have not realized.

To prepare students in a writing class for approaching their work in this fashion, try returning to this tried and true exercise. Give them a copy of Lewis Carroll's "Jabberwocky" with the nonsense words underlined. Ask them to substitute "real" words for those underlined, and at the same time, to explain why they have chosen a certain word, that is, part of speech, to fill a particular slot. Rare is the native speaker of English, or the reasonably fluent second language student, who cannot plug in the correct part of speech. This small exercise goes a long way towards convincing students that in fact they do have a good command of grammar even if they don't have the technical terms for their knowledge, or the ability to always put it into practice—yet! A discussion of "Jabberwocky" is also an ideal way to introduce basic parts of speech and their functions. For instance, in the first two lines, "Twas *brillig* and the *slithy toves*/ Did gyre and *gimble* in the *wabe*," why does a student substitute "raining" or "sunny" for "brillig"? Because the opener, "It was," is a common cue, and we know from experience that certain categories of words will follow "it was" in certain situations; what follows might be simply an adjective, "it was funny," for instance, or it might be a description of time or weather conditions—"it was three o'clock" or "it was raining." The context here suggests that an adjective itself is not enough, and our experience tells us that tales often open with time or weather indicators: "Twas a dark and stormy night." Similarly, we know that the "the" is probably going to be followed by a noun, and nouns frequently have "s" endings, so "toves" becomes "doves" or "frogs" or whatever appropriate substantive pops into our minds. If these cues aren't enough, we see that a verb phrase, "did gyre," follows in next position—yet another cue that "toves" is a noun. After performing this exercise, you and your students might find it useful to look at Humpty Dumpty's own explication of the opening of the poem in *Through the Looking Glass*. The important point for both student and teacher to remember is that it is not chance that determines what words will work in this poem: it is our sense of "correct" grammar, derived from our own experience with the language.

After the students have learned to develop correct sentences from their own faulty ones, the next step is to avoid such errors altogether in their writing. By reading their papers aloud to themselves, students can look at and listen to the cues they themselves have provided, and respond to those cues as readers first, and writers second. In this way, they become true editors of their own work, not just proofreaders; they become critical, not only of the smaller grammatical elements, but of the sound of their paragraphs and of the essay as a whole.

Of course this experience, especially among remedial college-level students, is not infallible. Nonetheless, students rarely make severe mistakes when working at the individual sentence level. Often, too, when class exercises are constructed in this way from students' current work, the first person to provide a correct version is the very

person who wrote the original sentence. An added benefit is increased interest in the exercises, since students will usually respond much more favorably to their own work than to the contrived story lines of most grammar book exercises.

To reiterate briefly, the students must first see a correct version that they have created themselves by relying on its sound and on the initial cues; then they see the original error. This is the key: first the correct form, then the error.

This exercise is not a philosopher's stone: it cannot change leaden prose to golden. Nor is it the Vege-matic of composition: it cannot chop, peel, and julienne sentences and paragraphs. *NEVERTHELESS, THE SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS IT CREATES CARRIES OVER INTO THE ACT ITSELF OF WRITING AN ESSAY.* If the students look at their own work and the work of others in this manner with regularity and attention, they achieve a surprising degree of carryover to the drafts of their papers. The act of reading a paper out loud and asking the question, "Is that how I would have *said* this?" helps students develop the distance necessary to edit their prose with a fair amount of objectivity. Students might not always be able to pinpoint and correct an error, but they are at least able to locate areas where the possibility of error—or confusion—exists, because they are learning to read their own work critically, as they would the work of another writer. Through this technique, too, they begin to develop a sense of where they, as individual writers, most often run into trouble, and they can pay particular attention to these places.

There are no secrets here, only a great deal of hard work. But it is in fact a technique that we all can use to transform our writing into communication, and this way, we can begin to extricate ourselves from the trap of teaching errors and can begin to teach our students good writing.

A RETURN TO THE DRAFT: OR, HOW TO WAGE WAR ON THE NON-REVISER

Ruth D. Tschumy

Hope springs eternal, and nowhere is it *more* eternal than in English teachers. We gamely persist in the weekly theme—due one week from today. Yet, even with rose-colored glasses firmly in place, we fail to find the writing growth we had hoped for. The papers roll in, we mark the same mistakes we marked last week, and later check the revisions for dutiful, if mindless, corrections. Next week—repeat performance. Once again, hope triumphs over experience.

If we could devote all of every class to composition, we could lead our students step by step through the writing process. We know, for instance, that inexperienced writers seldom rethink their work. The draft and final product of the inexperienced are often identical or differ only in minor editorial changes—a comma here, a spelling correction there. That it is the result of linear writing, where students write "straight through, sentence by sentence, in classic 'Sherman through Georgia' fashion" (Crowley 1977, p. 167), has been commented on by Crowley, Emig (1971), Clapp (1975), Gebhardt (1977), and others. In contrast to this, we know that experienced writers rework their thoughts—reshaping and rearranging them. If we had the time, we could emphasize this back-and-forth movement, showing our students that good writing entails reformulation of initial thoughts. Indeed, Gebhardt outlines in-class activities and assignments to help lead students through the dynamic process of generating, drafting, and revising their ideas.

> ...THE KIND OF ASSESSMENT WE GIVE...DETERMINES WHETHER THE STUDENT'S REVISION IS A FURTHER CHISELING OF THE ROUGH STONE OR...MERELY A PAINT-BY-NUMBER EXERCISE.

But unless the class is devoted solely to composition, *time* rears its pointed head, and we frantically juggle not only the demands of writing, but also the demands of grammar, vocabulary, literature...(need I go on?). So we assign the weekly theme and persist in the hope that what's handed in is the culmination of a dynamic process of drafting and revising; experience whispers in our ear that this is folly, *but*—hope springs eternal.

Even given our time limitations, isn't there a better sequence to help students write better? Clearly the weekly writing format does not promote major reshaping and rearranging. The papers we get are simply neatened-up versions of our students' initial thoughts as they beeline through Georgia on their way to "I'm done!" The very

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sequence, in fact, of the paper–teacher correction–revision cycle prevents major rethinking and reshaping because it suggests to the student that revision is something done *after* the paper is written, the cosmetic correction of red-penciled *awk*'s and *agr*'s to satisfy the whim of some grammar freak.

A better format for the weekly theme is the draft–assessment–paper sequence. If we assess students' drafts *before* grading their final papers, we force them into the role of reviser. In the true sense of the word *assessment,* we "sit beside" or act as assistant judge in helping students see where reshaping and rearranging is needed. This sequence has gained some recognition at the college level. McDonald (1978) notes that although most research on the writing process has emphasized either prewriting or the final product, nevertheless the draft must not be ignored. He concludes that teachers should respond to drafts before grading final papers and can do so, in fact, without running the risk of rewriting the paper for the student. Indeed, since we know that revision is a normal and necessary part of *arriving at* the final product, we must build it into the system. If we don't build revision into the system, students will continue to hotfoot it through Georgia, eyes straight ahead, minds at parade rest.

To get the most out of the draft–assessment–paper sequence, we need to look briefly at the revision process and, more important, at obstacles that prevent effective revision. Beach (1976) found central differences between students who revised their papers extensively and those who didn't. The revisers conceived of their drafts as highly tentative, needing a great deal of reformulation, whereas the non-revisers saw little need for major reworking. The two groups also differed in their conception of the revising process. The revisers thought in terms of major alterations while the non-revisers simply smoothed out the rough spots, reflecting "teacher and textbook conceptions of revising as final polishing of wording and mechanics" (Beach, p. 164).

As Beach notes, *we* may be our students' worst enemies in the revision arena. One obstacle to our students' understanding of the revision process has been the kind of assessment (annotations and comments) their papers have received in the past. Since we assume students pay attention to us, however naive the assumption, we must make sure our annotations accomplish what we intend them to. If we are trying to teach student writers that revision is a process leading to substantive changes in content and shape, then annotations heavily emphasizing mechanics, usage, and punctuation to the exclusion of content and structure are self-defeating. Undeniably, mechanics, usage, and punctuation must be "polished" before the paper is turned in, but of greater importance in the draft is the crafting, the chiseling of the rough stone that must be done *before* the buffing and polishing.

But unless students see the revision process as worth their time, all is for naught. In the paper–teacher correction–revision format, our standard practice of requiring revisions but giving little if any credit for them must seem the ultimate in busywork to a group whose most notable choral response is "whadiget?" We are reluctant to give grades for revision because of the nagging suspicion that revised papers are at least fifty percent our own work. After all, isn't *correcting* papers one of our major tasks? The very phrase we use must certainly contribute to our uneasiness about giving credit. But it must be obvious, once again, that the kind of assessment we give the paper determines whether the student's revision is a further chiseling of the rough stone or merely a paint-by-number exercise. If our annotations are corrective and prescriptive, we'd be grading our own work if we were to give a grade to revisions. On the other hand, if our annotations force students into an awareness of rhetorical choices and of their

effectiveness, then why shouldn't credit be given for revisions conscientiously undertaken?

A related obstacle is the students' view of revision as a "do it again until you get it right" type of punishment. Irmscher (1979) comments that students dislike "returning to a job they consider finished, particularly when it means revising or rewriting a theme that is returned a week after it was written" (p. 177). Beach found that both non-revisers *and* revisers tended to lose interest in revising. To students, revision seems not only tedious but after-the-fact, a messing-up of an already completed assignment. The draft-assessment-paper sequence provides compelling answers to all these problems.

In the draft-assessment-paper format, we make clear and sharp distinctions in both terminology and even appearance between drafts and papers. A draft is not a paper; the common practice of using "final draft" to refer to finished paper must seem confusing to students. To help them "see" the difference, we should make sure that drafts and papers do not look alike. Requiring that drafts be done on yellow, legal-sized sheets and papers on standard white might emphasize their difference. We assess the draft and return it to the student, who must then assume the role of reviser, changing the draft into a paper. Since, as we've seen, students are reluctant revisers because it means messing up their finished product, our draft-assessment-paper sequence lets them know they are messing up not a completed paper but a draft, which is work-in-progress and rightly "hack-upable." Fancy footwork? No, what we've done is build revision into the system, making it something that happens *during,* not after, the composing process. We've forced the student to approximate the writing habits of the experienced writer.

When we're afloat in yellow sheets, what then? Again, the *way* we assess the draft is critical if we wish to promote reshaping and rethinking. What we write determines whether our assessment is a stimulus to true revision, a stimulus to mere neatening up, or is, in fact, the revision itself—do this, do that, right here, right there—which would render meaningless the grade we give the paper later on. McDonald suggests we use questions instead of statements. No argument there, but first we need to decide what we're questioning. If we had world enough and time, McDonald's compelling suggestion of a "phased procedure" of assessment over two successive drafts prior to the paper would merit deep consideration. He recommends that on the first draft, we limit our annotations to matters of focus, or, if the focus is sharp, to matters of content, coherence, and clarity. On the second draft, sentence structure should be assessed. Obviously, sheer numbers of students prevent most of us from using McDonald's phased procedure, but his point is well taken. If we write *CS* and circle the very spot the crime occurred, we haven't accomplished much in promoting true revision. If most of our annotations deal with *sp*'s, *agr*'s, *frag*'s, and *pro ref*'s, then we're communicating the message that our major concern is polishing, not chiseling. On the other hand, if our assessment helps students to consider why they made one rhetorical choice as opposed to another, we're forcing the type of rethinking that may lead to substantive changes in concent and shape, the type of rethinking that characterizes the experienced writer.

"How is paragraph 3 related to your thesis?" "Does the idea in paragraph 5 flow logically out of the preceding paragraph?" "Will readers find this piece of evidence convincing? Did you?" "Have you given too much emphasis to minor points?" "Could you give variety to your writing by changing short, choppy sentences into complex

sentences?" "Why did you coordinate these ideas? Would subordination be better?" "Is your style effective, given your particular subject?" These are the types of questions that might lead students into an examination of their rhetorical choices, which is, after all, the essence of revision.

In the draft-assessment-paper sequence, the draft, of course, is ungraded. We focus students' attention on the strengths and weaknesses of their papers and on our assessments for improving them. When the paper is turned in with the draft stapled to it, we then perform our legitimate function of evaluating quality. At this point, we can return the paper with simply a grade on it and no other commentary, or, at most, a grade and a checklist of plusses and minuses in a variety of areas. The coach, if you will, has given his or her all to the practice session, and now can say to the player after the game: "Well done" or "You blew it."

Is the draft-assessment-paper sequence effective in improving students' writing? Beach (1979) studied whether teacher assessment of drafts affected revising by high school students. Those students who received assessments of their drafts before they wrote their final papers scored significantly higher on degree-of-change, a measurement of how extensively the drafts were revised, than those who received no draft assessment. They also scored higher on fluency, and Beach notes that some research indicates a correlation between fluency and quality. Finally, the students who had their drafts assessed showed greater use of supporting material than those who weren't provided with draft annotations. Beach concludes: "If composition teachers want to encourage revising of drafts, they need to provide evaluation during the writing of drafts....If teachers focused their evaluation on the content and organization of a rough draft, then students might recognize the need to make substantive changes at that stage" (Beach, pp. 119 and 111).

Indeed, we know that for many students "prettying up" is the only difference between what's scrawled out at home and what's handed in the next day. The draft-assessment-paper format allows us to move our efforts back a peg, to catch students in the act of composing and force them to duplicate the writing patterns of experienced writers. By focusing our assessment on the draft, we force students to recognize the need to make substantive changes *during* the composing process. Further, we have changed the old writing format to a sequence that provides incentives for true reshaping and rethinking; we dispel the student's view that something required but ungraded is a waste of time. We aren't worried that the grade we give the paper reflects more our work than the students', because we know our annotations, mostly in the form of questions, have acted to make students aware of the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of their rhetorical strategies. Our assessments haven't provided the answers, only the questions. We've finally admitted that the draft, a process formerly left to the privacy of the student's bedroom, should be dragged out into the light and recognized by students and teachers alike as a critical step in the composing process. What "showing your work" is to math, the draft is to writing. We need to check it over. Is the draft-assessment-paper format yet another educational flash in the pan? No, it's a hopeful answer to an eternal problem!

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IN PRAISE OF PEER APPRAISAL

Candace Jesse Stout

> In the eighth grade my teacher announced one day that we would have to do a mammoth term paper. She handed out this twenty page instruction manual explaining exactly how she wanted it presented. I read the whole thing, followed it to the last detail, and spent more time on it than any single writing project before or since then. I confidently handed it in, expecting an A. However, a week later when I got it back, I saw a C- next to the title "The Importance of Air Power in W W II." It was marked with red ink. Somehow it seemed that this teacher got the same type of pleasure with this vicious act as a graffiti artist does on a bathroom wall.[1]

Composition teachers have known for some time that writing is a painful, fearful process for many students, and anyone would readily admit that an assignment requiring an in-depth history and analysis of one's own writing would not be easy. Even so, when I asked my senior composition students to complete such a task, neither they nor I was prepared for the outcome of this assignment. Many revealed, as they handed in their papers, that the writing had been a kind of cleansing process, that they had been glad for the opportunity to comment upon the teachers and assignments that had been so wounding to them. I was surprised to learn of the extent of the students' frustrations, the feelings of futility, shame and personal failure that they had experienced throughout their years of submitting compositions to so many well-meaning teachers like myself. In the end, it happened that this assignment was as much a learning experience for me as it was for them. After ten years of reading, marking, and commenting upon hundreds of student papers, I had begun to see some practical sense in an *English Journal* article of October, 1978, which maintained that students could be taught to evaluate their own work, and that this type of evaluation by peers was likely to be more influential upon the student than a teacher's. This premise set forth in Irvin Peckham's "Peer Evaluation" had actually been mandated by my students through their personal analyses of their writing. Their comments made me realize that my long-used method of evaluating compositions had not only had a negative effect upon my professional energies and enthusiasm, but also had probably had little positive effect in improving student writing skills. Like their teacher, up until this point few of my seniors had been exposed to any method of

"AFTER I GOT THE PAPER BACK, I DIDN'T LIKE THE GRADE AND SHE HAD THESE COMMENTS ON THE PAPER HERE AND THERE AND THAT WASN'T TELLING ME ANYTHING...."

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composition evaluation other than the standard written teacher evaluation. After having listened to many of the more graphic papers presented in class, my seniors decided it was time for a change, and so did I.

By the time students have attended classes for eleven or twelve years, they may not have solved the majority of their writing problems, but they are well aware of many of their writing faults. They may not have the knowledge and analytical ability to correct these faults, but the majority of them have intuitively developed enough writing know-how to be able to identify their major writing weaknesses. Most of them have developed an "ear" for writing. The average student, however, is usually not aware that his "ear" is an asset that can act as a key to writing improvement. One student wrote:

> I have been shy about writing ever since I was in grade school. I feel that there is supposed to be a big difference between writing and speaking. When writing, I feel I should use hidden meanings, instead of simply explaining the purpose for which I am writing.

Another discouraged writer said:

> I'd finally get an idea, but then I couldn't get it down on paper. When I finally did get it down, it wasn't me. It was not mine. I don't speak like I write.

A student must be made to understand that there is a positive transfer of skills from his spoken language to his writing. Linguists have long professed that spoken language is an intuitive process that begins rather simplistically, but has the intrinsic potential to become a complex, sophisticated process of effective communication.[2] Although an experienced composition instructor recognizes that there exist differences between speaking and writing, he also recognizes that there are, and there must necessarily exist, vast similarities.[3] Peer appraisal, with its high potential for oral-aural presentation, offers an excellent vehicle through which to teach and to reinforce at least a partial reliance upon the individual's ability to speak his native language with proficiency and to discern a variety of positive and negative structures through his listening skills. High school students must be reminded that they have been fluent speakers of their language for at least some thirteen years and that that kind of experience must count for something. Granted, purely mechanical techniques such as certain spellings, punctuation, capitalization, and even some subtleties of agreement must simply be learned without much transfer from speech. Still, many of the more important concepts such as sentence completeness and variety, coordination and subordination of ideas, parallel structures, and placement of modifiers can be improved upon through speaking and hearing first, then writing. In one of our most recent peer appraisal sessions, one student commented after having read her paper to the group:

> As I started to read my paper to the class, it seemed to be going smoothly until what I thought was the best part, which was the climax. Well, it wasn't what I thought it was! The more I read, the worse it got. The faces in the class were full of dismay and all my work was down the drain.

It was easy for this young lady to realize at this point that had she read her paper aloud before completing her final draft, she would very likely have found many of the weak sections and could have improved upon them.

More than teaching the valuable lesson of a stronger reliance upon oral skills, peer appraisal seeks to improve and make changes in another too often overlooked aspect of composition evaluation. Simply stated, this alternative method of evaluation saves the teacher. As Mr. Peckham put it, "I was rapidly developing the symptoms of a classic burn out: Give them busy work; have them read; have them do anything; but don't have them write." A major cause for this "burn out" is the tremendous number of papers that must be evaluated under the traditional methods. Logistically, this leads to more cursory evaluations. With the peer evaluation, a greater amount of time is spent working with the students in the classroom. Some time is spent in reproducing student papers for the perusal of each class member, but the quantity of home paper work is diminished. This reproduction need not be time-consuming, since there are several practical and efficient ways student papers may be mass copied. First, overhead transparencies may be made and projected upon a screen for the reader and audience. This not only allows clear visibility for all, but also allows the use of a grease pencil to make actual revisions and corrections right there on the spot. Second, students may be asked to either type or write carefully on a ditto master, which may be run off, for conservation's sake, on recycled paper. Finally, a spirit master of the student writing may be made from a Thermofax machine, and those copies in turn be run off on the ditto machine. These techniques or any others the instructor may create will take nowhere near the time that thorough home perusal of each paper would require.

Perhaps the most viable reasons for seeking different methods of composition evaluation came directly from my students and their first writing assignment of the year. Having been forced to go back to earlier writing experiences and to examine those factors that helped or hindered their writing progress, many of my young writers made pithy little statements that clearly made a case for peer evaluation. In retrospect, one very reticent boy wrote:

> I handed in a paper I had worked on for quite a long time. When it came back, I wasn't surprised when I noticed it was completely rewritten, but still had my name on it. I felt as if I were condemned as a writer forever.

Another stated the futility of my former grading efforts even more precisely:

> That night I went home and tried every way I knew to understand this assignment. I wrote this paper and handed it in. After I got the paper back, I didn't like the grade and she had these comments on the paper here and there and that wasn't telling me anything anyway. So all I can say was that I tried.

The final blow to traditional methods was written by a student who appears nervous and apprehensive over each writing assignment he turns in.

> All my writing hang-ups stem from a long list of ten page writing reports that were glanced at and thrown away. This hurts me terrible because I look at something like that as destruction of a monument. Would a builder who spent long hours on a shed want it appraised and then destroyed?

As one can see from the poor fellow who poured his efforts into "The Importance of Air Power in W W II," a one-to-one teacher-written evaluation of student writing

can create in many young writers the feelings of frustration, anger, and especially failure. After all, when a student begins to construe our helpful red marks as something akin to graffiti on a bathroom wall, we instructors need to look for some alternatives.

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[1]This and other quotes are taken from papers written by senior composition students at Hickman High in Columbia, Missouri.

[2]Owen Thomas, Transformational Grammar and the Teacher of English (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966), p. 209.

[3]Thomas, p. 220.

NCTE'S 1980 ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS IN WRITING

The 1980 Achievement Awards in Writing competition, sponsored by the National Council of Teachers of English for high school students throughout the U.S., is now underway. Materials describing the programs and nomination blanks have been mailed to high school English department leaders, who arrange for their schools to participate and gain national recognition for their top student writers.

Through this nationally known competition, now in its 23rd year, NCTE cites approximately 800 high school seniors for excellence in writing and recommends them to colleges and universities for admission and for financial aid, if needed. NCTE also honors teachers and schools that have participated in the training of these young men and women.

By February 23, high school juniors are nominated for Achievement Awards in Writing by their school English departments. Seven thousand students were nominated for the awards in the 1979 competition. Each nominee submits an impromptu theme and a sample of his or her best writing to be judged by state judging teams. These teams are composed of high school and college teachers of English, working under the direction of state coordinators.

Results of the judging are announced in October of each year, and the names and schools of the 800 students selected for recognition are published in a booklet that is distributed to college admissions officers and English department heads, state governors and education officers, members of Congress, NCTE affiliate organizations, and the participating high schools. The students and their high school English departments receive certificates of commendation.

Further information and materials for the Achievement Awards competition may be obtained from: Achievement Awards in Writing, NCTE, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, ILlinois 61801.

WHAT IS WRITTEN MUST BE READ

William Rakauskas

Let me begin with a given: If anyone wants to learn how to write, then he or she must write. Right! There is no other way. However, writing for writing's sake is never enough. What is written must be read, reacted to, or at least acknowledged by some human being. And therein lies the rub. Certainly it is no great feat to get students to write, to push ideas around on paper. But reading and responding to all that students generate demands patience, dedication, and time.

Time is crucial. I teach three sections of writing each semester, two basic courses and one advanced course. Each section produces eight to ten major pieces of writing (three to four pages), which are begun in class and completed out of class. The people in my classes also produce five or six short in-class essays. Forms of discourse are the traditional *EDNA*--*e*xposition, *d*escription, *n*arration, and *a*rgumentation. Responding to all this writing takes up my days and often my nights. Yet I am in a fortunate situation. I do not teach five classes a day, and working with me in the

...BEFORE WE HOP THROUGH THE AWKWARD STEPS OF THE PEER EVALUATION POLKA, WE'D BETTER THINK TWICE ABOUT WHAT WE ARE DOING.

freshman writing lab, helping me with the evaluation of some of the papers, is my specially trained laboratory assistant (see "Providing Laboratory Training for Future Teachers of Composition," *English Education*, Spring 1972). Still, I find more and more of my energy consumed by the necessary demands of responding to students' written communication. How much more time a high school teacher must spend on this essential activity is dramatized in the following excerpt from Donald Murray's *A Writer Teaches Writing:*

> Most English teachers agree that students should write a paper each week....If they correct a paper in the way they have been taught, identifying each grammatical and spelling error as well as marking it for logical thought, appropriate diction, tone and all the other ingredients of a good piece of writing, it is an intensive, exhausting task.
>
> ...If a teacher with 130 pupils corrects one paper each week per student in the conventional manner, spending just 10 minutes on each paper, he will work from seven to midnight, Monday night, Tuesday

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> night, Wednesday night, and Thursday night. On Friday he will have to correct from seven o'clock to one o'clock Saturday morning if he wants to get the job done and take the weekend off [p. 108].

Unreal? Not at all! Are there any solutions? Well, there has been a rash of publicized enthusiasm appearing in our professional journals about having students involved in the paper reading process. But before we hop through the awkward steps of the peer evaluation polka, we'd better think twice about what we are doing. We are the professionals; students are students, amateurs. If your son or daughter were in medical school, would you want him or her to be taught by an intern? If your daughter or son were in law school, would you want her or him to be taught by another law student? More to the point—if you have children in grade school, high school, or college right now, are you content to have children taught by other children? Children can interact among themselves, and, to be sure, learning does occur as a result of this interaction. But it cannot be spontaneous interaction; the activity, if it is truly learning activity, must be directed by a professional. Simply stated, the primary evaluator and director of students' writing must be the teacher.

Teaching and observing teachers is part of my job. Too many times I see teachers attempting to do what they term "group work" in composition. What it turns out to be is a fun session for the students. Now there is nothing wrong with having fun in the classroom. However, learning to write is more work than it is fun. Let's not play games; our job is to teach writing.

In supervising student teachers, I sometimes find my trainees talking about and around writing, but too few times do I see them engaging students in the process itself. Or I listen to student teachers say, "Write an analysis of this poem or of that character's development"; or, "Develop your position on the play's thesis." Then the students write. After a few minutes of writing, students read their papers to the class. The teacher is bored, the class is bored, I am bored. I fidget; I sizzle; I say, "Now I know why freshmen have so many problems developing a written proposition and so much difficulty presenting an idea in an essay with discernible organization. No wonder my students do not recognize need for apostrophes; no wonder my students have no sense of appropriate word choice." Students talk about what they scribble, but no one is acting as a responsible *reading* audience for what these students attempt to put on paper.

I ask, "Why?" Student teachers tell me they want to have students do writing and that they are prepared to evaluate the students' efforts, but this upsets schedules, plans, and unit objectives. Grammar must be drilled; literature must be read and discussed so that appreciation can be developed. There is simply no time to read student writing.

My sympathy they have. Their excuses I cannot accept. If writing skills are important, then teachers must help students cultivate these skills. Students must be given opportunities to compose; they must be given guidance in discovering things to write about (Inventio); they must examine varied means of arranging material (Dispositio); they must be taught functional grammar so that they can develop syntactic versatility (Elecutio); they must study models that illustrate the way a writer's attitude determines what he says; they must practice ways to develop their own attitude toward the subjects they write about (Memoria); and they must learn to say something worthwhile about their subject matter (Pronuntio).

Is the problem—time—still evident? Maybe. All of the above does require a

teacher's guidance, therefore a teacher's time. Does the above scheme evade the issue? No.

Earlier I said that what is written must be responded to. But what is written need not be a full-dress essay each time a student engages in writing. Writing is a process leading to a product. We read product, we teach process. Our responsibility is to offer a final response to product—when the product is ready to be evaluated. No peer can do this. However, students can help other students in the process. They can act as sounding boards for ideas during the stage of invention. Only the "expert" knows when the product is ready. Just as timing is critical in the harvesting of any crop, knowing when enough time is spent in process is critical in teaching writing. Allowing a crop of peas to remain too long on the vines turns their tender sweetness to starchy flatness. Allowing student writers too much time in one stage of the process turns enthusiasm to dullness. But a non-expert can offer initial reactions to organization, punctuation, and diction. I repeat: everything a student writes must be read, but not everything must be read by the teacher. Classmates, other teachers, parents, and friends can respond to early drafts. The English teacher must act as consultant, helping students shape disparate material during the process. When the product is ripe, the teacher harvests. With careful cultivation, the paper is ready, and the primary reader's job is made much easier.

Here is what I am suggesting: (1) Recognize the problem—time. (2) Do something about it. Plan ways to make time for writing and responding.

Instead of an assign-on-Monday, collect-on-Friday procedure, set aside a composition week each quarter. During that week have the students fully involved in the complete process. No formal study of grammar; no literature, except as literature may suggest ideas for writing. Make writing the focus of all emphasis for that week. From Monday through Friday, students, in and out of class, can be inventing, arranging, selecting, writing, and rewriting. All drafts are honed by Friday. Friday is final draft day. Students, using all revision notes, write their final product in class.

The weekend? Make a sacrifice once each quarter. Devote your time to reading and evaluating the efforts of your students. They deserve your personal attention. Get those papers back on Monday. Believe me, your students will appreciate your effort, and they will have immediate feedback for what they have done.

Are you saying, "That's only four papers for the whole year; my students already do more than that now"? Well, perhaps you are right. But are they getting the benefit of on-the-scene guidance, encouragement, and full professional feedback for their efforts?

The above procedure engages the students in writing, in all stages. The above procedure makes teaching of writing possible.

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SURVIVING THE SQUEEZE: EVALUATING CREATIVE WRITING

Robert A. Rennert

Perhaps more acutely than their colleagues, teachers of creative writing in grades 7-12 feel trapped between the proverbial rock and a hard place. The hard place is mental, a personal conviction that evaluating the creative work of their students according to a standard grading system is inimical to imaginative expression. The rock is more than metaphorically physical, for it is embodied in a principal or administrator who demands a letter or a number, some token for each student's permanent records. Though I have spoken with many creative writing instructors at regional and national conferences, I have yet to meet one who, in a typical school setting, was successful in having the grading requirement waived for a creative writing course.

Caught in the squeeze between administrative pressure and personal conviction, some teachers choose from a variety of options to disguise the fact that they are not grading creative writing. With cooperation from students (who naturally like the intrigue of foiling the administration), some instructors turn in a set of grades that has little, if any, connection with what students are doing in the course. One teacher I know simply gave students in his creative writing elective course their grade from the previous term, plus a little "bonus" added to the grade for cooperating with the scheme. A similar option, sometimes exercised by teachers whose English Department has no separate creative writing course, is to include a nongraded poetry writing or short story writing unit within, say, an American literature course. Students in such courses know their grade will be determined by quizzes and writings related to the reading material, but that the creative work they do periodically will not be averaged into their grade for the term.

...REFUSAL TO GRADE IN THE NAME OF FREEDOM TO CREATE ASSUMES THAT CREATIVE WRITING IS SO UNIQUE, EVEN MYSTICAL...THAT ENGLISH TEACHERS SHOULD ABDICATE THEIR ROLE AS EVALUATORS.

At the same time some teachers choose to dodge the administration's demand for grades, other simply capitulate. They get involved in labeling: "This is a B poem," "That is a D short story," or "Your one-act play deserves a 78%." For the sake of a final grade on a computer print-out, a group of poems is treated to the traditional total-and-average procedure, as if it were simply a series of quiz grades or spelling tests.

The problem with both dodging and capitulating is that they are, of course, extreme reactions. On the one hand, refusal to grade in the name of freedon to create assumes that creative writing is so unique, even mystical, that English teachers should

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abdicate their role as evaluators. Yet our own experience as writers should convince us that it takes as much creativity to write a good expository essay (which we do not hesitate to grade) as it does to compose a good poem. To be consistent, we would then have to forgo the evaluation of student essays.

To capitulate, on the other hand, suggests that the teacher believes that imaginative writing can be handled as if there were no significant differences between a poem and a short expository essay. Unfortunately, English teachers have yet to formulate standards for creative work that even approach the "precision" of criteria like unity, coherence, and mechanical correctness, which we apply to essays. Therefore, it is sheer arrogance to assume that we as teachers can, with any reliability and consistency, distinguish an A poem from a C poem. Besides precluding sufficient recognition of the differences between imaginative and discursive writing, grading individual poems or short stories according to the traditional A-F scheme does not sufficiently attend to the creative expression of the student.

What we need is a procedure that allows us both to exercise our professional responsibility as evaluators and to encourage creative expression. As Ken Kantor has argued, "We don't have to praise that which is mediocre, but we may want to accept, at least for a while, genuine expression of feeling."[1] I would like to propose some principles and procedures that take account of professional responsibility as well as students' imaginative expression.

First principle: let students in on the game. The teacher should spend part of the course or unit discussing, in large groups and with individual students, the meaning of a published set of standards. Figure 1 shows, for instance, an evaluation-standards form used by one group of teachers.[2] With appropriate examples of entire stories or excerpts from selected works, the teacher can demonstrate the meaning of these standards, or standards she feels are appropriate for the abilities of the students in the course. Explaining the standards is best done gradually, so the students do not feel swamped with having to know everything at once. And the applications of the standards can be made cumulatively, beginning with a selected few at the start of the course and moving toward the end of the term or unit when a student's work would be measured by all of the criteria listed on the sheet.

The limitation of such a form, however, is that it places emphasis almost entirely on literary quality or literary form. But, as Ken Kantor has shown, the evaluation of creative writing is a different ball game. He cites other elements for consideration: divergent thinking, playfulness and fantasy, risk taking and skepticism about convention, openness to experience, effective surprise, and symbolic expression. These elements could serve as "means by which we can assess the degree of creative thinking evidenced in a given piece of writing."[3] While it is probably impossible to list those elements in the same way that "structure" appears on the sample form in Figure 1, it is still important that the teacher demonstrate that she prizes such manifestations of creative behavior as well as the more formal aspects of a poem or short story.

A second principle: once appropriate standards are published and discussed, they should never be applied for arriving at a standard grade for an individual work. In other words, the outcome of applying the standards should *not* be in a form similar to "This is a B poem." Besides being arrogant, as I've noted, such judgments give students a sense of finality, that judgment has been rendered once and for all. Since that feeling as much as any other dampens students' creative expression, the evaluation

Figure 1

STANDARDS OF EVALUATION: THE SHORT STORY

___ 1. UNITY: There is a logical order of events ___
Events are arranged in chronological order ___
The time span is compressed ___
The story is unified ___

___ 2. SETTING: The setting contributes to the story ___
The setting is effective ___

___ 3. STRUCTURE: The beginning is strong ___
The conflict is believable, relevant ___
The conflict is introduced early ___
The conflict appeals to heterogeneous audience ___
The plot relates to theme ___
The action builds to a logical climax ___
The resolution is satisfying ___

___ 4. INTEREST: The action builds suspense ___
Sentence structure is varied ___
Word choice is colorful ___
Imagery is effective ___
Trite expressions are avoided ___

___ 5. CHARACTERS: Characters are well defined and developed ___
Characters behave and act like real people ___
Characters are revealed through thoughts ___
actions ___
dialogue ___

___ 6. HONESTY OF FEELING:
Situations and emotions are genuine, not sentimental ___
Story makes a valid statement about life based on experience ___
Story is not contrived but develops naturally ___

___ 7. POINT OF VIEW: Point is view is consistent ___

___ 8. APPEAL: Appeal is universal ___
Approach is original ___

___ 9. GRAMMAR AND MECHANICS

___10. NEATNESS

scheme should instead be structured to encourage the development of the students' abilities.

A sample procedure will make this clear. Suppose that after a few days of generating ideas and drafting poems, a student submits a poem for evaluation. The teacher's response could include two items. One is a standards-evaluation form for poetry, completed by the teacher (a form similar to that in Figure 1). The student can then see her poem-performance measured against published criteria.

The other item is a comment sheet like that shown in Figure 2. This form allows the teacher to evaluate students' work in a nonthreatening way. A student will receive one of three evaluations, an A (which means "acceptable"), CA ("conditionally acceptable") or U ("unacceptable"). In actual practice, A's are probably rarely given for initial submissions of a particular work but are given after the student has taken a poem or short story through several revisions. Toward the end of the term, when students have become more adept at criticizing their own work, the A's for initial submissions occur more frequently. Similarly, the U evaluation is rarely, if ever, given. It can be used for the occasional student who completely misses the direction or purpose of a project, but its primary value is psychological. Students tend to equate U with F on the traditional grading scale, so they feel a measure of accomplishment when the "succeed" in getting an evaluation better than a U.

Figure 2

Name_____ Title_____ Project #_____

Date_____ Evaluation: A CA U

___ The project was acceptable because it met all the criteria.
The best features of this work are:

___ The project was evaluated CA or U because of the problems noted on the evaluation form.
The best features of the work are:

Suggestions for revision:
___ Schedule a conference with me to discuss your work.
___ Arrange for a small group to discuss your work on a writing workshop day.
Specific recommendations:

Other comments about the work you submitted for evaluation:

The most frequently given evaluation for initial submissions can be CA, provided the teacher has prepared students by showing tham that it does not mean C on the standard scale or "average." Emphasis can be placed on "acceptable"—that the teacher recognizes the creative expression and imagination of the student and accepts the poem or short story as a manifestation of creative behavior. Properly explained and handled by the teacher, the CA rating does not make the student feel that final judgment has been rendered. Instead, the student is able to say to himself, "My original impulse is okay. I just need to revise my draft to make it a better poem." Thus the evaluation scheme takes into account, and encourages, the process of revision and development. The student knows she can count on the teacher's help as well as peer help in reshaping the work so that it does receive on a subsequent submission a rating of A.

The form also allows the teacher ample room to make comments along the lines of the elements Ken Kantor has suggested. It gives the teacher a place to make specific suggestions for improvement without marking up the student's submission. And, if the teacher requires the student to include previous drafts, working sheets, notes, and the like together with the draft to be evaluated, the form can also be used to comment on the process the student has used to compose the work. Commenting on the revision a student has made of stanza three, for instance, is perfectly appropriate: it takes into account student effort and further encourages development.

The "Project #____" category on the form suggests a third principle: allow students to contract for a final grade in the elective course or creative writing unit. For example, suppose that the focus of a ten-week creative writing unit is on short poems. The teacher may decide to make students aware of fifteen different poetic forms or focus on a variety of themes. In order to get a final grade of C in this hypothetical course, a student may have to complete (i.e., receive ratings of A on) seven out of fifteen projects. The student could choose which seven to do, based on his own interests and inclinations. For a higher grade, the student could be asked to do more projects or perhaps more extensive projects (such as submitting a group of poems in a given form or on a selected theme).

By allowing students to contract for a grade and to choose which projects they would like to complete, the teacher is allowing for individual preference (some students simply don't like haiku) and probably encouraging more participation in the course. By the end of the course the student will have developed some "negative" reactions. She may discover, for example, that she does not like writing sonnets, so she does not attempt to get an A for a sonnet project. But, more positively, the student will have created a portfolio of her works, all of which have been accepted according to the criteria established for the course.

By applying these principles and employing forms similar to the ones above, a creative writing teacher should be able to survive the squeeze. Since a grade is awarded at the end of a term or unit, the administration is pleased. The teacher's professional responsibility to evaluate is maintained but in a way that takes account of the special nature of creative writing and the individual, creative expression of the student.

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[1]Ken Kantor, "Evaluating Creative Writing: A Different Ball Game," English Journal, April, 1975, p. 74.

[2]This form, as well as others for different literary genres, can be found in Part IV of a handbook for teachers of creative writing prepared by David Anstaett, David Baker, Trish Bransky, Robert C. Jones, Janice Stephenson, and Maryfrances Wagner (Warrensburg, MO: Mid-America Press, 1978).

[3]Kantor, p. 74.

BOOK REVIEW: COMPOSITION AND ITS TEACHING,

EDITED BY RICHARD GEBHARDT

James R. Rankin

A collection of twenty-one articles from issues of *College Composition and Communication* during the editorship of Edward P. J. Corbett, *Composition and Its Teaching* delivers just what its unadorned title promises. Throughout, the emphasis stays on composition--and its teaching, without hoopla and without hyperbolic, hard-sell gimmickry. The two Forewords by William Irmscher and Richard Larson point out the accomplishments of Corbett, and rightly so. And Richard Gebhardt's editing makes for a sensible, balanced compendium of wide-ranging essays dealing with perhaps the hottest topic in education today.

In selecting the articles, Gebhardt tells us that he involved college and secondary members of the Ohio Council of Teachers of English Language Arts so that all of the articles "have been judged useful or informative or provocative" by a cross-section of informed opinion. The quoted claim is not excessive, as a scanning of the table of contents suggests and a reading or rereading of the articles reveals. Gebhardt writes a felicitous Introduction, surveying the main themes of the collection and underlining key ideas and emphases.

COMPOSITION AND ITS TEACHING IS A WELCOME REMINDER OF THE VALUE OF CCC AS A RESOURCE FOR ALL OF US IN OUR SOLITARY AND SHARED TEACHING AND LEARNING.

Sandwiched between the opening two essays and the closing two essays, which frame the collection, is a wealth of thinking on recurrent problems and issues in composition and its teaching. But without those framing essays the reader would lack a necessary perspective. Thus Jim Corder's "What I Learned at School" and Mina Shaughnessy's "Diving In: An Introduction to Basic Writing" get us off in the right direction by stressing the need for the teacher to learn as well as the student. Shaughnessy wisely reminds us that, because of the nature of instruction in writing, "teachers and students cannot easily escape one another's maladies." She predicates certain qualities required in our teaching tasks--humility, openness, and expertise--after she has astutely commented:

> This system of exchange between teacher and student has so far yielded much more information about what is wrong with students than about what is wrong with teachers, reinforcing the notion that students, not teachers, are the people in education who must do the changing....There may in fact be important connections between the changes teachers undergo and the progress of their students.

JAMES R. RANKIN is Associate Professor of Secondary Education at the University of Arizona, Tucson.

At the close of the collection Richard Gebhardt's "Balancing Theory with Practice in the Training of Writing Teachers" and Lee Odell's "Teachers of Composition and Needed Research in Discourse Theory" explore exactly what their titles indicate. Gebhardt's piece is a neat example of what it preaches and successfully completes its own balancing act. Odell calls for research in the classroom by individual teachers and argues cogently for such studies to give us "more insight into our students' writing and, consequently, into our job as teachers." At the same time as they offer valuable ideas, these concluding articles also help to frame the seventeen sandwiched essays. The seventeen focus on theory and practice and their interplay. And they illustrate applications for the classroom or demonstrate research in action and the need for further research to improve instruction in composition.

Some of the seventeen articles rehearse and expand upon ideas already familiar to readers of *CCC*--for example, A. M. Tibbetts' "Rhetorical Stance Revisited" and Arthur Stern's "When Is a Paragraph?" Others serve as pioneering efforts and explore provocative questions--for instance, Janet Emig's "Writing as a Mode of Learning" and Ann Berthoff's "Tolstoy, Vygotsky, and the Making of Meaning." Still others attract the reader for their stimulating attempts to provide fresh views on long-standing issues: witness Donald Murray's "Write Before Writing," Robert Gorrell's "Usage as Rhetoric," and Frank D'Angelo's "A Generative Rhetoric of the Essay." The remaining selections make zestful contributions also and deal with topics ranging from Kenneth Burke and Carl Rogers to editing to the use of the computer in teaching composition.

Composition and Its Teaching promotes no party line but manages in 136 pages to hold before the reader many of the central concerns in writing instruction today. Thus we hear of the importance of process in writing and the contributions to be made by rhetoric. We are reminded of the connection of writing and thinking, the mental operations linked to producing good prose. More specifically, we learn about the aspects of audience and context, about the analysis of error in writing, about the paragraph and its development, about many pragmatic considerations of the teacher in the classroom. As a result, besides providing enjoyable and beneficial reading for the individual, this collection of articles from Corbett's editorship would work admirably for English methods classes, for teacher institutes and workshops, and for in-service programs in the teaching of writing. *Composition and Its Teaching* is a welcome reminder of the value of *CCC* as a resource for all of us in our solitary and shared teaching and learning.

Composition and Its Teaching can be ordered from

Richard Gebhardt, Editor
English Language Arts Bulletin
Findlay College
Findlay OH 45840

Price: $4.95 (including postage and handling), $4.15 per copy for orders of 6 or more mailed to one address.

The National Council of Teachers of English

STANDARDS FOR BASIC SKILLS WRITING PROGRAMS

The following standards were developed by a specially selected committee of teachers, supervisors, and writing specialists for use by states and school districts establishing comprehensive literacy plans. The National Council of Teachers of English urges study of these standards as a means of determining that plans attend not only to effective practice within the classroom but also to the environment of support for writing instruction throughout the school and the community. If effective instruction in writing is to be achieved, all the standards need to be studied and provided for in shaping comprehensive literacy plans.

At a time of growing concern for the quality of writing in the society, it is important to take the most effective approaches to quality in school writing programs. These standards will help states and school districts assure that efforts to be undertaken will indeed lead to improvement.

Planners must begin with an adequate conception of what writing is. To serve this purpose, we offer the following:

Operational Definition of Writing

Writing is the process of selecting, combining, arranging and developing ideas in effective sentences, paragraphs, and, often, longer units of discourse. The process requires the writer to cope with a number of variables: *method of development* (narrating, explaining, describing, reporting and persuading); *tone* (from very personal to quite formal); *form* (from a limerick to a formal letter to a long research report); *purpose* (from discovering and expressing personal feelings and values to conducting the impersonal "business" of everyday life); *possible audiences* (oneself, classmates, a teacher, "the world"). Learning to write and to write increasingly well involves developing increasing skill and sensitivity in selecting from and combining these variables to shape particular messages. It also involves learning to conform to conventions of the printed language, appropriate to the age of the writer and to the form, purpose and tone of the message.

Beyond the pragmatic purpose of shaping messages to others, writing can be a means of self-discovery, of finding out what we believe, know, and cannot find words or circumstances to say to others. Writing can be a deeply personal act of shaping our perception of the world and our relationships to people and things in that world. Thus, writing serves both public and personal needs of students, and it warrants the full, generous and continuing effort of all teachers.

STANDARDS FOR BASIC SKILLS WRITING PROGRAMS

An effective basic skills program in writing has the following characteristics:

TEACHING AND LEARNING

1. There is evidence that knowledge of current theory and research in writing has been sought and applied in developing the writing program.
2. Writing instruction is a substantial and clearly identified part of an integrated English language arts curriculum.
3. Writing is called for in other subject matters across the curriculum.
4. The subject matter of writing has its richest source in the students' personal, social, and academic interests and experiences.
5. Students write in many forms (e.g., essays, notes, summaries, poems, letters, stories, reports, scripts, journals).

6. Students write for a variety of audiences (e.g., self, classmates, the community, the teacher) to learn that approaches vary as audiences vary.

7. Students write for a wide range of purposes (e.g., to inform, to persuade, to express the self, to explore, to clarify thinking).

8. Class time is devoted to all aspects of the writing process: generating ideas, drafting, revising, and editing.

9. All students receive instruction in both (a) developing and expressing ideas and (b) using the conventions of edited American English.

10. Control of the conventions of edited American English (supporting skills such as spelling, handwriting, punctuation, and grammatical usage) is developed primarily during the writing process and secondarily through related exercises.

11. Students receive constructive responses—from the teacher and from others—at various stages in the writing process.

12. Evaluation of individual writing growth:
    (a) is based on complete pieces of writing;
    (b) reflects informed judgments, first, about clarity and content and then about conventions of spelling, mechanics, and usage;
    (c) includes regular responses to individual pieces of student writing as well as periodic assessment measuring growth over a period of time.

SUPPORT

13. Teachers with major responsibility for writing instruction receive continuing education reflecting current knowledge about the teaching of writing.

14. Teachers of other subjects receive information and training in ways to make use of and respond to writing in their classes.

15. Parent and community groups are informed about the writing program and about ways in which they can support it.

16. School and class schedules provide sufficient time to assure that the writing process is thoroughly pursued.

17. Teachers and students have access to and make regular use of a wide range of resources (e.g., library services, media, teaching materials, duplicating facilities, supplies) for support of the writing program.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

18. Evaluation of the writing program focuses on pre- and post-program sampling of complete pieces of writing, utilizing a recognized procedure (e.g., holistic rating, the Diederich scale, primary trait scoring) to arrive at reliable judgments about the quality of the program.

19. Evaluation of the program might also include assessment of a sample of student attitudes; gathering of pertinent quantitative data (e.g., frequency of student writing, time devoted to writing activities); and observational data (evidence of prewriting activities, class anthologies, writing folders, and student writing displays).

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